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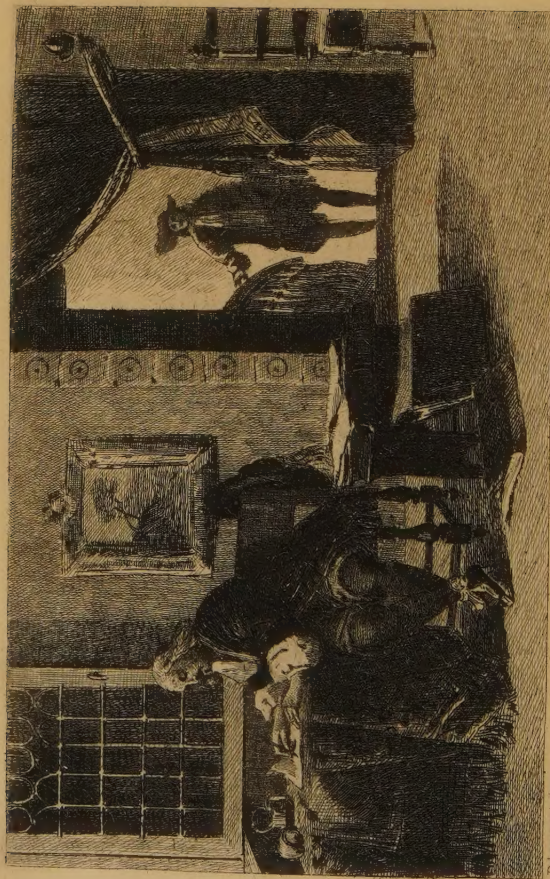
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VICTOR HUGO

HAN OF ICELAND

TRANSLATED BY

JOHN CHESTERFIELD

VOLUMES I & II



PHILADELPHIA

GEORGE BARRIE & SON

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VICTOR HUGO

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*Han of Iceland* is a book by a young man, and by a very young man.

One feels in reading it that the youth of eighteen who wrote *Han of Iceland* during an attack of fever in 1821, had as yet had no experience of things, no experience of men, no experience of ideas, and that he sought to imagine all these.

In all works of thought, drama, poetry, or fiction, there are three ingredients: what the author has felt, what the author has observed, and what the author has imagined.

In fiction particularly, in order that it may be good, it is necessary that there should be many things felt, many things observed, and that the things imagined should be derived logically and clearly and without break of continuity from the things observed and the things felt.

By applying this law to *Han of Iceland*, one will easily discover what constitutes, above everything else, the defect in this book.

In *Han of Iceland* only one thing is felt, the love of the young man ; only one thing is observed, the love of the young girl. All the rest is imagined, that is to say, invented. For youth, which has neither deeds, nor experience, nor trials behind it, cannot invent except with imagination. Thus *Han of Iceland*, admitting that it is worth the trouble of being classified, is nothing else than a fantastic romance.

When the early years are passed, when the brow begins to lower, when one feels the need of doing something better than making curious tales to frighten old women and little children, when one has worn off in the clash of life the roughness of youth, one recognizes that all invention, all creation, all imagination of art, should have for a base, study, observation, consideration, science, limit, comparison, serious meditation, attentive and continual painting of each thing from nature, conscientious self-criticism ; and that inspiration, under these new conditions, far from losing anything, gains greater breadth and stronger pinions. The poet then knows exactly what he does. All the idle dreams of his early years crystallize in some way and become thoughts. This second period of life is usually, for the artist, that of great works. Still young and yet mature. This is the precious stage, the intermediate and culmination point, the hot

and dazzling hour of midday, the moment when there is the least shade and the most possible light.

There are master-artists who all their life maintain this height, in spite of the decline of years. These are the supreme geniuses. Shakespeare and Michael Angelo have left upon some of their works the imprint of their youth, upon others the trace of their old age.

To return to the novel of which a new edition is herewith published, such as it is, with its jerky and panting action, with its personages all of a piece, with its savage blunderings, with its haughty and clumsy manner, with its candid fits of dreaming, with its colors of all sorts thrown together without thought for the eye, with its crude style, shocking and harsh, without distinction and without skill, with the thousand excesses of all kinds which the author committed almost without knowing how, it fairly well represents the epoch of life in which it was written, and the particular state of the soul, of the imagination and of the heart in youth, when one is in love with one's first love, when one turns the ordinary troubles of life into grandiose and poetic obstacles, when one's head is full of heroic fantasies which exalt one in one's own eyes, when one is already a man in two or three ways and still a child in

twenty others, when one has read Ducray-Duminil at eleven, Auguste Lafontaine at thirteen, and Shakespeare at sixteen, a strange and rapid scale which makes you pass suddenly, in your literary affections, from the silly to the sentimental, and from the sentimental to the sublime.

It is because, in our opinion, this book, a work naïve above everything, represents with such fidelity the age which produced it, that we again give it to the public in 1833 exactly as it was written in 1821.

Besides, since the author, small as is the place he holds in literature, has submitted to the common law of all writers, great or small, of seeing his first works praised at the expense of the last and of hearing it declared that he is far from having fulfilled the little promise that his early efforts gave, without objecting to criticisms perhaps judicious and founded on objections which would be suspected coming from his own mouth, he believes it his duty to reprint his first works just as he wrote them, in order to allow his readers themselves to decide, if they be sufficiently interested, whether they are steps forward or backward which separate *Han of Iceland* from *Notre Dame de Paris*.

PARIS, MAY, 1833.



## FIRST EDITION

The author of this work, from the day on which he wrote the first page, until the day when he was able to trace the pleasing word FINIS at the bottom of the last, has been the dupe of the most ridiculous illusion. He imagined that a composition in four volumes would be worth the trouble of being thought out, he lost his time in seeking a fundamental idea, in trying to develop well or badly a good or bad plot, in the arrangement of the scenes, in an endeavor to combine effects, to study customs as thoroughly as possible; in short, he started his work in earnest.

It was only by and by, at the moment when, according to the author's custom of ending where the reader commences, he began to elaborate a long preface, which was like the coat of arms of his work, and contained, with explanations of the moral and literary principles upon which his conception rested, a more or less rapid summary of the different historic events which it embraced, and a more or less complete picture of the country in

which it took place ; it was only then, we say, that he discovered his mistake, that he recognized all the insignificance and all the frivolity of that with which he had spoiled so much paper, and that he felt how much he himself had been deceived, so to speak, in persuading himself that this novel could really, even to any extent, be a literary production, and that his four volumes made a book.

He wisely resolved then, after having made public apology, to say nothing at all in this species of preface, which the publisher, consequently, will take care to print in large type. He will not even inform the reader as to his name or surname, neither whether he is young or old, married or a bachelor, neither whether he writes elegies or fables, odes or satires, nor whether he wishes to write tragedies, dramas or comedies, neither whether he enjoys a patriciat in some academy, nor if he has a tribune in any journal ; all things, however, very interesting to know. He will confine himself solely to remarking that the picturesque part of his novel has been the object of particular care ; that one may frequently observe in it Ks, Ys, Hs, and Ws, although he has never used these romantic letters except with a certain sobriety ; witness the historic name of *Guldenlew* which many chroniclers write *Guldenloëwe*, but this he has

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not dared to permit himself to do; one may likewise find numerous diphthongs altered with much taste and elegance; and finally, that all the chapters are preceded by strange and mysterious epigraphs, which add singularity to the interest, and give more character to each part of the composition.

JANUARY, 1823.





## SECOND EDITION

They assured the author of this work that it was absolutely necessary to specially devote some lines of notice, preface or introduction to this second edition. He in vain represented that the four or five unlucky empty pages which escorted the first edition, and with which the publisher is determined to burden this, had already drawn upon himself the anathemas of one of our most honorable and distinguished writers who had accused him of appropriating *le ton aigre-doux* of the illustrious Jedediah Cleishbotham, school-master and sexton of the parish of Gandercleugh; he had in vain asserted that this brilliant and judicious critic, severe toward a fault, would certainly be pitiless toward a repetition; and presented, in short, a host of other equally good reasons for dispensing with it. It seems that some one has overpersuaded him, since he is writing a second preface, after having so keenly repented having written the first. At the moment of putting into execution this daring determination, he at first conceived the idea of placing at the head of this second

edition, that with which he did not dare to burden the first, to wit: *some general and special views on fiction*. Meditating over this little literary and didactic treatise, he was still in that mysterious enthusiasm of composition, short at its best, when the author, thinking to secure an ideal perfection to which he will never attain, is completely carried away with the work in hand; he was, we say, in that hour of internal ecstasy, when work is a delight, when the secret possession of the muse seems much more sweet than the gaudy pursuit of glory, when one of his most learned friends entered and suddenly tore away from him this possession, this ecstasy, this enthusiasm, by assuring him that many very famous, very popular, and very able men of letters, found the dissertation which he was preparing wholly bad, insipid and tedious; that the sad apostolate of critic for which they had been chosen by several public sheets, imposing upon them strict duty of pitilessly pursuing the monster of *romanticism* and bad taste, they were, at that very moment, occupied in composing for these certain impartial and enlightened journals, a criticism, conscientious, analytical, and above all, piquant, of the said future dissertation. At this terrible news, the poor author

*Obstupuit; steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit;*

that is to say, he could find no other expedient than to leave in limbo, whence he was preparing to take it, this dissertation, *vierge non encor née*, as says Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, which such rude and exacting criticism condemned. His friend advised him to replace it simply by a sort of *Avant-propos des éditeurs*, in which he could most modestly pay himself, through these gentlemen, all the compliments which so voluptuously tickle the ear of an author; he at the same time offered many models taken from some works very much in favor, some commencing with the words: *The immense success and popularity of this work, etc.*; others with these: *The European celebrity which this novel has acquired, etc.*; or: *It is now superfluous to praise this book, since the universal voice declares that all praise is far below its merit, etc., etc.* Although these different formulas, so says a wise adviser, are not without some tentative virtue, the author of this book does not possess enough humility and paternal indifference to expose his work to the dis-enchantment and unreasonableness of the reader who might have seen these magnificent praises, nor enough effrontery to emulate the showmen of the fairs, who, in order to whet the curiosity of the public, show a crocodile painted on a canvas, behind which, after having paid

to see, one finds nothing but a lizard. He therefore casts aside the idea of shouting his own praises through the willing mouths of messieurs, his publishers. His friend then suggested to him to give as a passport to his villainous Icelandic brig-and something which would make him fashionable and bring him in touch with the century, either some pleasantries against the marquises, or bitter sarcasms against the priests, or ingenious allusions against the nuns, the capuchins, and other monsters of the social order. The author would have asked nothing better, but it did not seem to him, to tell the truth, that the marquises and the capuchins had any direct connection with the work which he published. He could, in truth, have borrowed other colors from the same palette and thrown in several good pages of philanthropics, in which—always prudently keeping clear of a dangerous bank, hidden under the sea of philosophy, which is called the bank of the *tribunal correctionnel*—he could have advanced some one of these truths, discovered by our sages, for the glory of man and the consolation of the dying; to wit: that a man is nothing but a brute, that the soul is nothing but a gas more or less dense, and that God is nothing; but he thought that these incontestable truths were already very much



used and worn out, and that he would be adding nothing but a drop of water to the flood of moral reasonings, atheistic religions, maxims, doctrines and principles with which we have been deluged, for our own good, for the last thirty years, to such an extent that one could—if it would not be irreverent—apply to them the couplet of R gnier on a shower :

*Des nuages en eau tombait un tel degoust,  
Que les chiens alt r s pouvaient boire debout.*

Besides, these lofty matters did not yet relate very visibly to the subject of this work, and he was much puzzled to find a tie that would bring them together, although the art of transitions is singularly simplified since so many great men have found the secret of passing without a break from a stall to a palace, and of exchanging, without incongruity, the cap of the *police* for a civic crown.

Recognizing therefore that he could not create either by his talent or by his science, *by his wings or by his beak* as the ingenious poetry of the Arabs has it, an interesting preface for the readers, the author of this is determined to offer them nothing but a grave and na ve account of the improvements made in this edition.

He warns them at once that the words, *second edition*, are here rather incorrectly used,

and that the title *first edition* is really what should be on this reprinting, considering that the four unequal numbers of grayish paper stamped in black and white, in which the indulgent public believed that they saw the four volumes of *Han of Iceland*, had been so dishonored by typographical incongruities by a barbarous printer, that the unhappy author, in looking over his unrecognizable production, was constantly reminded of the punishment of a father to whom they gave back his son, mutilated and tattooed by the hand of a Lake Ontario Iroquois.

Here, *l'esclavage* of the suicide was replaced by *l'usage*, again, a typographic manœuvre gave a *lien* a voice which belonged to a *lion*; further along it deprived the mountain of Dofre-Fiel of its *pics* only to replace them by *pieds*, or, when the Norwegian fishermen expected to moor in the *criques*, they pushed their barques on the *briques*. In order not to fatigue the reader, the author passes over in silence, all the outrages of this sort which bitter memory recalls :

*Manet alto in pectore vulnus.*

It is enough to say that there was no grotesque picture, no strange use of words, no absurd idea, no incoherent figure of speech,

no burlesque hieroglyphic, which the industriously stupid ignorance of the logographic overseer did not have printed. Alas! whoever in his life has had a dozen lines printed, if it was nothing more than a notice of marriage or burial, has felt the deep grief of a similar sorrow!

It is, therefore, with the most scrupulous care that the proofs of this new publication have been revised, and now the author dares to believe, with one or two intimate friends, that this restored novel is worthy of figuring among those splendid writings, in the presence of which *the eleven stars bow down, as though before the moon and the sun.*

If messieurs the journalists accuse him of not having made the corrections, he will take the liberty of sending them the proofs, blackened by infinite labor, of this regenerated book; for it is claimed that there is among these gentlemen more than one doubting Thomas.

Besides, the kind reader can notice that many dates have been corrected, some historical notes have been added, one or two chapters have been enriched with new epigraphs; in short he will find on each page changes, the extreme importance of which has been measured by that of the work itself.

An impertinent adviser wishes to have added at the foot of the pages, translations of

all the Latin phrases which the learned Spigudry scatters through the work, for the information—adds this individual—of those masons, tinkers or hairdressers who edit certain journals in which perhaps *Han of Iceland* might be reviewed. One may imagine with what indignation the author received the insidious advice. He at once gave the sorry jester to understand that all journalists, without distinction, are sons of urbanity, knowledge and good faith, and asked him not to do him the injustice of believing that he was one of the numerous ungrateful citizens, always ready to address to the dictator of taste and genius the wicked verse of an old poet :

*Tenez-vous dans vos peaux et ne jugez personne :*

and that he, in short, was far from thinking that the *peau du lion* was not the real skin of these popular gentlemen.

Still another exhorted him—for he should tell everything frankly to his readers—to place his name on the title of this novel, until now the abandoned child of an unknown father. He must confess that aside from the pleasure of seeing the seven or eight roman characters which form what is called his name, standing out in beautiful black letters on fine white paper, there is also a certain charm in

seeing it shine alone on the back of the printed copy, as if the work which he had created, far from being the only monument of the genius of the author, were but one of the columns of the imposing temple which should some day be raised to his immortality, instead of only a slight essay of his hidden talent and unachieved glory. That proves that he has at least the intention of some day being an illustrious and important writer. In order to triumph over this new temptation, it needed all the fear of the author, that he might not be able to escape the common herd of spoilers of paper, who, even when throwing off the anonymous, still always remain *incognito*.

As for the observations which several amateurs of delicate ear have made concerning the savage rudeness of his Norwegian names, he finds the exception well taken; therefore he proposes, as soon as he is made a member of the Royal Society of Stockholm or of the Academy of Berghen, to invite messieurs the Norwegians to change their language, considering that the villainous jargon which they have the address to use, wounds the tympan of our Parisiennes, and that their odd names, as rugged as their rocks, produce on the delicate tongue which pronounces them the same effect that their bear grease and bran

bread would produce on the nervous and sensitive roof of our palate.

It remains for him to thank the eight or ten persons who had the goodness to read his work in its entirety, as proving the truly prodigious success which it has obtained; he likewise vows his gratitude to those of his pretty female readers who, he is told, have been so kind as to imagine from his book a certain ideal of the author of *Han of Iceland*; he is infinitely flattered to learn that they have been gracious enough to give him red hair, a woolly beard and haggard eyes; he is covered with confusion to learn that they deign to do him the honor of believing that he never cuts his nails; but on his knees he begs them to be convinced that he does not carry his ferocity so far as to devour little living children; however, all these facts will be settled when his renown shall have risen to the level of that of the authors of *Lolotte et Fanfan* or of *Monsieur Botte*, transcendent men, twins of genius and taste, *Arcades ambo*; and when they see his portrait at the head of his works, *terribles visu formæ*, and his biography, *domestica facta*.

He was just about to close this too long notice, when his publisher, at the moment of sending the work to the journals, came to ask some little complimentary notices on his own



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work, adding, in order to dissipate all the scruples of the author, *that his handwriting would not be recognized, for he would recopy them himself*. Such consideration seemed to him most touching. As it appears that in this century each luminary makes it a duty to enlighten the next as to his personal qualities and perfections, in which respect no one is better instructed than their proprietor; so, therefore, as this last temptation is quite strong, the author believes it his duty, in case he should ever succumb to it, to warn the public never to believe more than half of all the papers say about his work.

APRIL, 1823.



HAN OF ICELAND



## I.

What have you seen? What is this that you see? This is not me—who then? I know nothing of it.

STERNE—*Tristram Shandy.*

“There’s where love leads, neighbor Niels, poor Guth Stersen would not be lying on that great black stone, like a starfish forgotten by the tide, if she had thought only of repairing the boat and mending the nets of her father, our old comrade. May Saint Usuph, the fisherman, console him in his affliction.”

“And her betrothed, Gill Stadt, that handsome young fellow, whom you see beside her?” replied a voice, shrill and trembling. “He would not have been there, if, instead of making love to Guth and going to seek his fortune in the cursèd mines of Røeraas, he had passed his youth rocking his young brother’s cradle which hung from the smoky rafters of his cottage.”

Neighbor Niels, to whom the first gossip had spoken, interrupted her. “Your memory

ages with you, Mother Olly, Gill never had a brother, it is that which embitters the sorrow of poor Widow Stadt, for her cottage is now quite desolate; if she wishes to console herself by gazing towards heaven, she finds between her eyes and heaven, the roof of her old cottage, where hangs the empty cradle of her child, now become a fine young man, but lying dead."

"Poor mother!" replied Mother Olly, "it is the young man's fault; why did he go to Røeraas to become a miner?"

"I believe true enough," said Niels, "that these infernal mines take from us a man for every ascalin of copper which they give us. What do you think, comrade Braal?"

"The miners are fools," replied the fisherman. "A fish cannot live out of water; a man should not go into the earth."

"But," asked a young man in the crowd, "if working in the mines was necessary for Gill Stadt to secure his betrothed? . . ."

"One ought never to risk life for affections which are far from being worth it and cannot replace it. Fine wedding bed, true enough, that Gill has won for his Guth!"

"Did this young woman drown herself in despair for the death of her lover?" inquired another curious one.

"Who said that?" cried the deep voice of a soldier who elbowed his way through the



crowd. "This young girl, whom I knew well, was certainly engaged to a young miner, who was crushed, a short time ago, by a blast in the subterranean galleries of Storwaadsgrube, near Roeraas; but she was also the mistress of one of my comrades; and the day before yesterday she was venturing furtively to Munckholm, to celebrate with her lover the death of her betrothed, the boat in which she was, struck a rock and capsized, and she was drowned."

A confusion of voices arose: "Impossible, master soldier!" cried the old woman; the young ones were silent; and neighbor Niels recalled maliciously to fisherman Braal, his grave remark, "There's where love leads!"

The soldier was beginning to be seriously annoyed with his female contradictors; and had already called them *Old witches from the cave of Quiragoth*, and they were not disposed to endure peaceably so grave an insult, when a sharp and commanding voice, crying *Peace, peace, dotards!* put an end to the debate. All became silent, as when the sudden crow of a cock is heard among the cluckings of the hens.

Before relating the balance of the scene, it would be perhaps as well to describe the place where it happened; it was—as the reader has already doubtless divined—in one of those

dismal buildings which public pity and social forethought have consecrated to unknown corpses, last asylum of the dead, who, for the most part have lived unhappily; where crowd the curious, the morbid, or kindly observer, and often friends, weeping relations, who after an insupportable anxiety have nothing left but a lamentable hope. In an epoch long ago, and in the partially civilized country, to which I have transported my reader, they had not yet thought, as in our cities of mud and gold, to make these places a receptacle for monuments ingeniously ghastly and elegantly funereal. The light did not fall through a tomb-shaped window of an artistically sculptured vault, upon sorts of couches which seem to accord the dead some of the comforts of life, and where the pillow appears ready for sleep. If the guardian's door were opened, the eye, wearied by nude and hideous corpses, had not as now, the pleasure of resting itself upon elegant furnishings and joyous children. Death was there in all its ugliness and in all its horror; and they had not yet tried to deck its fleshless skeleton with plumes and ribbons.

The hall where our gossips found themselves was spacious, and so gloomy that it appeared even more spacious; it received light only through the low square door which opened on the quay of Drontheim, and from a gap

roughly cut in the ceiling, through which fell a beam of dull and feeble light, together with the rain, hail or snow, according to the season, upon the corpses lying directly underneath. This hall was divided in the direction of its length by an iron rail breast-high. The public entered the outer half by the square door; they saw in the inner six long black granite slabs, arranged parallel to each other. A little side door served, in each section, for the entrance of the guardian and his assistant, whose quarters filled the rear of the building which ran back towards the sea. The miner and his betrothed occupied two of the granite beds; decomposition was already shown in the body of the young girl by the large blue and purple spots which ran along her limbs in place of veins. The features of Gill appeared hard and severe, but his body was so horribly mutilated that it was impossible to judge whether his beauty was as real as old Mother Olly had said.

It was before these disfigured remains, in the midst of the silent throng, that the conversation, which we have so faithfully reported, took place.

A tall man, old and withered, with folded arms and bowed head, was seated on a broken stool in the darkest corner of the hall, apparently paying no attention, until the moment

when he rose suddenly, crying, "Peace, peace, dotards!" and seized the soldier's arm.

All became silent; the soldier turned around and burst into laughter at the sight of his singular interrupter, whose pale visage, scant and dirty hair, long fingers and complete costume of reindeer skin justified such a mirthful greeting.

Meanwhile a murmur arose in the crowd of women, for a moment silent: "It is the guardian of the Spladgest."<sup>1</sup> "The infernal porter of the dead!" "The diabolical Spiagudry!" "The cursèd sorcerer!"

"Peace, dotards, peace! If to-day is your devil's sabbath, hasten for your broomsticks, or they will fly away alone. Leave in peace this respectable descendant of the god Thor."

Then Spiagudry, forcing himself to make a gracious grimace, addressed the soldier.

"You were saying, my brave fellow, that this miserable woman? . . ."

"The old scoundrel!" murmured Olly.

"Yes, we are to him *miserable women*, because our bodies, if they fall into his clutches, bring him a fee of only thirty ascalins, whilst he receives forty for the paltry carcass of a man."

"Silence, hags!" said Spiagudry. "Truly these daughters of Satan are like their own kettles; when they boil they must sing. Tell me, my valiant king of the sword, is it likely

that your comrade would kill himself in despair at the loss of Guth, his mistress?"

Here burst forth the long suppressed explosion. "Listen to the miscreant, the old heathen!" cried twenty sharp and discordant voices. "He wishes to see another less among the living, on account of the forty ascalins which the dead bring to him."

"And what of that?" retorted the guardian of the Spladgest. "Does not our gracious king, Christiern V., may Saint Hospice protect him, does he not declare himself the born guardian of all miners in the kingdom, so that he may enrich his royal treasury by their paltry pittance at their death?"

"It is great honor to the king," replied fisherman Braal, "in comparing the royal treasury to the strong box of your charnel-house, and yourself to him, neighbor Spigudry."

"Neighbor?" said the guardian, offended at so much familiarity, "*your* neighbor, say rather your host! For it may happen, some day, my dear citizen of the barque, that I will lend you for a week one of my six stone beds. Besides," added he, laughing, "I spoke of the death of this soldier simply to learn if the custom of suicide was to become a custom in the grand and tragic passions which these ladies inspire."

“Well! Great corpse, guardian of corpses,” said the soldier, “what is the meaning of that amiable grimace which so well resembles the last smile on the face of a hanged man?”

“Splendid, my valiant!” replied Spiagudry. “I have always thought that there was more wit under the helmet of soldier Thurn, who defeated the devil with sabre and tongue, than under the mitre of Bishop Isleif, who wrote the history of Iceland, or under the square bonnet of Professor Shoënnig, who has damned our cathedral.”

“In that case, if you will take my advice, my old leather-sack, you will leave the revenues of the charnel-house, and you will sell yourself to the museum of curiosities of the viceroy, at Berghen. I swear to you, by Saint Belphegor, that there they pay weight in gold for curious beasts; but tell me, what do you wish of me?”

“When bodies are brought to us that have been found in the water, we are obliged to give half the fee to the fisherman. I wished to pray you, therefore, illustrious descendant of soldier Thurn, to urge your unfortunate comrade not to drown himself, and to choose some other form of death; a thing that would make little difference to him, and he would surely not wish to harm, in dying, the unhappy christian who will be hospitable to



his corpse, if the loss of Guth drives him to this act of despair."

"You deceive yourself, my charitable and hospitable guardian, my comrade will not have the satisfaction of being received in your charming inn with the six beds. Don't you suppose he has already consoled himself with another valkyrie, for the death of this one. By my beard, he was weary of Guth long ago."

At these words, the cloud, which had up to this moment hung over the head of Spia-gudry, burst with greater force than ever upon that of the unlucky soldier.

"So ! miserable scoundrel," cried the old women, "it is thus you forget us ! and we love such good-for-nothings."

The young women maintained silence ; some of them even, in spite of themselves, thought that this bad subject had pretty good looks.

"Oh ! oh !" said the soldier, "is this a rehearsal of the witches' Sabbath ? Beelzebub's punishment must be terrible to be condemned to listen to such punishments once a week !"

It is hard to conceive how this retort would have been received, if at this moment the general attention had not been absorbed by a noise which came from without. The noise gradually increased, and soon a band of

half-naked urchins, noisily running about a veiled litter carried by two men, entered the Spladgest.

“Whence comes this?” asked the guardian of the bearers.

“From the beach of Urchtal.”

“Oglypiglap!” cried Spiagudry.

One of the side doors opened, and a little man of the race of Laps, dressed in leather, presented himself, and made a sign to the bearers to follow him; Spiagudry accompanied them, and the door was closed before the curious multitude had the time to divine, from the length of the body on the litter, whether it was a man or a woman.

This was still the subject of their conjectures, when Spiagudry and his assistant reappeared in the large hall, carrying the corpse of a man, which they placed upon one of the granite slabs.

“It is a long time since I have handled such fine clothes,” said Oglypiglap; then stretching his neck and standing on tiptoe, he hung above the head of the corpse the elegant uniform of a captain. The head was disfigured and the limbs covered with blood; the porter washed him several times from an old broken bucket.

“By Saint Beelzebub!” cried the soldier, “it is an officer of my regiment. Let me see,

can it be Captain Boullar—at sorrow for loss of his uncle? Bah! he is his heir. Or Baron Randmer? he risked yesterday all his property at gambling, but to-morrow he might regain it with the chateau of his adversary. Could it be Captain Lory, whose dog was drowned? or Paymaster Stunck, whose wife is unfaithful? But really I do not see why anyone should dash out his brains for that.”

The crowd increased every minute. At this moment a young man passing along the quay, seeing this crowd, dismounted, threw the bridle into the hands of the groom who followed him, and entered the Spladgest. He was dressed in a simple traveling costume, armed with a sabre, and enveloped in a large green coat; a black plume, fastened to his hat by a diamond buckle hung over his noble features, swinging along his high forehead and mingling with his long chestnut hair; his boots and his spurs, covered with mud, showed that he had ridden a long distance.

When he entered, a squat little man, also wrapped in a cloak and his hands hidden in enormous gloves, remarked to the soldier :

“And who tells you that he has killed himself? That man no more committed suicide, I tell you, than the roof of your cathedral set itself on fire.”

As the double-edged weapon inflicts two wounds, so this speech produced two replies.

"Our cathedral!" said Niels, "is now being covered with copper. They say it was that miserable Han who set it on fire in order to give work to the miners, amongst whom was favorite Gill Stadt, who you see here."

"The devil!" cried the soldier in turn, "do you dare to tell me, the second musketeer of the Munckholm Regiment, that that man there has not blown out his brains!"

"This man has been murdered," replied the little man, coldly.

"Listen to the oracle! See, your little gray eyes see no clearer than your hands, which you hide in your great gloves in the summer."

An angry glance burned in the eyes of the little man.

"Soldier, pray your patron that these hands may not some day leave their imprint on your face."

"Oh! come outside!" cried the soldier, flaming with rage, then, suddenly checking himself: "No," said he, "one must not speak of duels before the dead."

The little man muttered some words in an unknown language, and disappeared. A voice was heard: "It was found on the beach of Urchtal."

"On the beach of Urchtal?" repeated the soldier; "Captain Dispolsen was to land there this morning coming from Copenhagen."

"Captain Dispolsen has not yet arrived at Munckholm," cried another voice.

"They say that Han of Iceland haunts that coast," replied a fourth.

"In that case it is possible that this man is the captain," said the soldier, "if Han is the murderer. For everyone knows that the Iclander assassinates in a manner so diabolical that his victims have often the appearance of suicides."

"What kind of a man is this Han?" asked they.

"He is a giant," said one.

"He is a dwarf," contended another.

"Has anyone ever seen him?" cried a third.

"Those who see him for the first time also see him for the last."

"Tut! silence," said old Mother Olly; "there are, they say, only three persons who have exchanged human words with him: that reprobate Spiagudry, Widow Stadt, and—; but he had a miserable life and a fearful death—that poor Gill that you see here. Tut!"

"Tut!" was cried on all sides.

"Now," exclaimed the soldier suddenly, "I am sure that it is true enough Captain

Dispolsen ; I recognize the steel chain that our prisoner, old Schumacker, gave to him on his departure."

The young man with the black plume abruptly broke the silence : " You are sure that it is Captain Dispolsen ? "

" Certainly, by all the merits of Saint Beelzebub ! " said the soldier.

The young man left at once.

" Call a boat for Munckholm, " said he to his servant.

" But, my lord, the general ? "

" Take back the horses to him. I will go to-morrow. Am I my master or not ? Quick, the day is closing, and I am in a hurry ; a boat. "

The groom obeyed and followed for some time, with his eyes, his young master, who disappeared towards the river.



## II.

I will seat myself near you, while you relate  
some agreeable story in order to pass the time.

MATURIN'S *Bertram*.

The reader already knows that we are at Drontheim, one of the four principal towns of Norway, although it was not a residence of a viceroy. At the period in which this story passes, in 1699—the kingdom of Norway was still united to that of Denmark and governed by a viceroy who resided at Berghen, a larger city, further south, and more beautiful than Drontheim, notwithstanding the nickname of “bad taste” given to it by the celebrated Admiral Tromp.

Drontheim offers an agreeable aspect when one arrives by the gulf to which this town has given its name; the harbor is large enough, but vessels cannot enter easily at all times, and it always presents the appearance of a canal; moored to the right are the Danish and Norwegian ships, and to the left the foreign vessels, according to the regulations. One sees

in the distance the town situated on a well-cultivated plain, and surmounted by the high turrets of the cathedral. This church is one of the finest specimens of Gothic architecture, as one may learn from the book of Professor Shoenning—so learnedly cited by Spiagudry—who described it before the frequent incendiaries had gutted it, bearing on its principal spire the Episcopal cross, the distinctive sign of the cathedral of the Lutheran bishop. Far beyond the town, above the blue horizon, one perceived the white and snowy peaks of the Kole Mountains, looking like the sharp *fleurons* of an antique crown.

In the middle of the harbor, about a cannon-shot from the shore, on a mass of wave-beaten rocks, rose the solitary Fortress of Munckholm, a gloomy prison, which then held a captive celebrated by reason of his long career of prosperity and his rapid downfall.

Schumacker, of obscure birth, had been loaded with favors by his master, then hurled from the office of Grand Chancellor of Denmark and Norway to the criminal bar, then condemned to the scaffold, and cast into a dungeon in a castle at the farther extremity of two kingdoms. His followers had deserted him, and he had no right to complain of their ingratitude. Could he complain if the ladders, which he had put so high only for the

purpose of raising himself, should break beneath him?

He who had founded the nobility of Denmark, saw from his place of exile, the grandees which he had created, sharing his dignities Count d'Ahlefeld, his mortal enemy, was his successor as Grand Chancellor; General Arensdorf, as Grand Marshal, had the disposal of all military promotions; and Bishop Spollyson exercised the right as inspector of the universities. The only enemy who did not owe to him his elevation, was Count Ulric-Frederick Guldenlew, natural son of King Frederick III., viceroy of Norway; and this was the most generous of all.

It is towards the gloomy rock of Munckholm that the boat of the young man with black plumes advanced slowly. The sun was rapidly sinking behind the lonely castle, whose mass intercepted its rays, already so horizontal, that the peasant on the far-off hills of eastern Larsynn could see the shadow cast upon the heather above him, of the sentinel on the tower of Munckholm.

### III.

Ah! my heart could not be more deeply wounded! . . . An unprincipled young man . . . he has dared to look there! His looks have soiled its purity. Claudia! The mere thought makes me beside myself.

LESSING.

“Andrew, order the curfew to be tolled in half an hour. Sorsyll will relieve Duckness at the main portcullis, and Maldivius will mount the platform of the big tower. Keep strict watch on the turret of the Lion of Sleswig. Do not forget at seven o’clock to have the gun fired as a signal for the chain to be drawn across the harbor;—but no, we still await Captain Dispolsen. It will therefore be necessary to light the beacon and to see if that of Walderhog is illuminated according to the order given to us yesterday. Let refreshments be in readiness for the captain. And, I was forgetting,—that we mark down two days in the cells for Toric-Belfast, second musketeer of the regiment; he has been absent all day.”

Thus spoke the sergeant-at-arms under the black and smoky archway of the guard-room

of Munckholm, situated in the low tower that protected the principal entrance of the castle.

The soldiers to whom he addressed these orders, left off gambling or quitted their beds, to execute them ; then silence fell again.

At that moment the measured stroke of oars was heard from without.

“ That is no doubt Captain Dispolsen at last ! ” said the sergeant, opening the grated window looking on the gulf. A barque was moored below the iron gate.

“ Who goes there ? ” cried the sergeant in a husky voice.

“ Open ! ” was the reply ; “ Peace and Safety.”

“ None may enter ; have you the right to pass ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ I will soon prove the truth of that ; if you lie, by the merits of my patron saint, I will make you taste the gulf water.”

Then re-shutting the wicket and turning about he added : “ It is not the captain ! ”

A light gleamed behind the iron door ; the rusty bolts creaked ; the bars were withdrawn ; the door opened, and the sergeant examined a parchment presented to him by the new-comer.

“ Pass,” said he. “ Stop, however,” added he briskly, “ take the buckle off your hat ;

according to the regulations no one is allowed to enter the prison with any jewelry, except the king and the members of the king's family, the viceroy and his family, the bishop and the chiefs of the garrison. You have none of these ranks, have you?"

Without replying the young man took off the forbidden buckle and threw it as payment to the fisherman who had brought him; the latter, fearing that he would repent of his generosity, hastened to place a large space between himself and his benefactor.

Whilst the sergeant, murmuring at the imprudence of the Chancellory in so prodigally issuing orders of admittance, replaced the heavy bars, and as the sound of his heavy boots echoed upon the stairway as he returned to the guard-room, the young man, after having thrown his cloak over his shoulder, passed rapidly under the dark arch of the lower tower, then along the parade, then through the artillery shed, where some old dismounted culverins, such as one may still see to-day at the museum of Copenhagen, were lying.

He came to the main portcullis, which was raised after an inspection of his parchment. Then, followed by a soldier, he crossed, diagonally, without hesitating, and as one acquainted with the place, one of these four



square courts which surrounded the great circular court, in the centre of which rose a large round rock upon which was the tower called the castle of the Lion of Sleswig, because Rolf the Dwarf caused his brother Joatham the Lion, Duke of Sleswig, to be imprisoned there.

Our intention is not to give here a description of Munckholm tower, more so because, were the reader confined in a state prison he might hope to *se sauver au travers du jardin*. That would be a mistake, for the castle of the Lion of Sleswig destined for prisoners of distinction offered to them, amongst other privileges, that of walking in part of a wild garden, quite a wilderness where holly bushes, old yew trees and some black pines grew in the crevices of the rocks about the tall prison, but surrounded by lofty walls and massive towers.

Arrived at the foot of this rock, the young man mounted some steps, roughly cut in the stone, until he reached the foot of one of the numerous towers in the enclosure which was pierced in the lower part with a postern gate which served as an entrance to the donjon. Then he loudly sounded a brass horn which had been given to him by the sentry at the portcullis. "Come in, come in!" cried a voice from within, "it is no doubt this cursèd captain!"

As the postern gate opened the new-comer saw, in the interior of a dimly lighted Gothic hall, a young officer lounging on a heap of mantles and reindeer skins, near one of those lamps with three burners which our forefathers hung from the ceiling, but which was now placed upon the floor. The elegance and foppishness of his costume, contrasted with the nakedness of the hall, and the clumsiness of the furniture. He held a book between his hands and turned himself half around to greet his visitor.

“It is the captain? Welcome, captain! You little thought you were keeping a man waiting whom you never had the satisfaction of knowing; our acquaintance will soon be made, will it not? Let us commence by your receiving my condolences on your return to this venerable chateau. For if I remain here much longer I shall become as gay as the owl that some one has nailed to the door of the donjon to serve as a scarecrow, and when I return to Copenhagen for the wedding of my sister, I’ll be hanged if four women in a hundred will recognize me! Tell me, are knots of rose-colored ribbon at the bottom of breeches still the fashion? Has any one translated any new romances of that French woman Mademoiselle de Scudéry? I swear by her ‘*Clélie* ;’ I suppose it is still read in

Copenhagen. It is my code of gallantry, now that I sigh at being so far removed from all attractive eyes . . . for beautiful as they are, the eyes of our young prisoner, you know of whom I wish to speak, never say anything to me. Ah! without the orders of my father! . . . I will tell you in confidence, captain, that my father, don't speak of it, has urged me—you understand—about the daughter of Schumacker; but I am only losing time, for this pretty statue has nothing of the woman about; she is always crying and never even looks at me."

The young man, who had not been able to speak on account of the extreme volubility of the officer, now exclaimed, in great surprise: "Sh! What say you? Have you been ordered to seduce the daughter of the unfortunate Schumacker?"

"Seduce. Just so! Yes, that is the term used in Copenhagen; but I defy Satan himself to succeed here. Day before yesterday, being on duty, I put on expressly for her a fresh ruff which was sent to me from Paris direct. Would you believe it? She never even raised her eyes, although I passed three or four times across her apartment clanking new spurs, of which the rowels are larger than a Lombardy ducat? It's the latest fashion, I believe, is it not?"

“Good heavens!” said the young man, striking his forehead; “this confounds me!”

“Does it not?” replied the officer, misapprehending the sense of this exclamation. “Not the slightest attention to me! Hardly credible, but it is true for all that.”

The young man walked up and down, violently agitated, with long strides.

“Will you take some refreshment, Captain Dispolsen?” asked the officer.

The young man aroused himself.

“I am not Captain Dispolsen.”

“What!” said the officer in a severe tone, and rising from his couch. “And who are you then, who has dared to intrude, and at such an hour?”

The young man produced his order.

“I wish to see Count Griffenfeld; I mean to say, your prisoner.”

“The count! the count!” murmured the officer with an air of suspicion. “But truly this order is quite in form; this is certainly the signature of Vice-Chancellor Grummond de Knud: ‘The bearer can visit at any hour and at all times all the royal prisons.’ Grummond de Knud is brother of old General Levin de Knud, who commands at Drontheim, and you know that this old general has brought up his brother-in-law.”

“Thanks for your family details, lieutenant. Do you not think that you have dwelt upon them enough?”

“This piece of impertinence is right,” said the lieutenant, biting his lips. “Hello, usher! usher of the tower! conduct this stranger to Schumacker, and do not grumble if I have unhooked your lamp, with its three burners and one wick. I am glad of the chance of examining an article which dates back to the time of Sciold the Pagan or of Havar the Cloven; and besides one hangs nothing but crystal lustres from the ceiling nowadays.”

He spoke, and while the young man and his guide crossed the deserted garden of the donjon, he took up again, this martyr of fashion, the thread of the amorous adventures of Clélie the amazon and Horatius the one-eyed.

#### IV.

MERCUTIO.—Where the devil should this  
Romeo be?

Came he not home to-night?

BENVOLIO.—Not to his father's; I spoke with  
his man.

*Romeo and Juliet*, Act II., Scene 4.

SHAKESPEARE.

Meanwhile a man and two horses were entering the court of the governor's palace at Drontheim. The horseman had dismounted, tossing his head with a discontented air; he was preparing to lead the horses to the stable, when he was roughly seized by the arm, whilst a voice exclaimed: "How! you here alone, Poël! and your master? Where is your master?"

It was the old general, Levin de Knud, who, from his window, having seen the groom and noticed the empty saddle, had hastened down and fixed on the valet a look still more disturbed than his question.

"Your excellency," replied Poël, bowing profoundly, "my master has left Drontheim."

"What! He was here then? He has left without seeing his general, without embracing his old friend! And since when?"

“He arrived this evening and left this evening.”

“This evening! This evening! But where has he stopped? Where has he gone?”

“He dismounted at the Spladgest and embarked for Munckholm.”

“Ah! I thought him at the antipodes, but what made him go to the castle? What was he doing at the Spladgest? There is my knight-errant! It is also a little my fault, for did I not bring him up thus? I have wished that he could have perfect freedom in spite of his rank.”

“Certainly he is not a slave to etiquette,” said Poël.

“No, but he is to his own caprices. He will doubtless return soon. Go, Poël, and ring for some refreshments for yourself. Tell me,”—and the visage of the general took on an expression of solicitude,—“tell me, Poël, have you come here direct?”

“General, we came straight from Berghen. My master was sad.”

“Sad? What then passed between him and his father? Does this marriage displease him?”

“I know nothing about it. But they say his Serene Highness insists on it.”

“Insists on it! You say, Poël, that the viceroy insists upon it! Since he insists, Ordener must have refused.”



"I do not know, your excellency. He appeared sad."

"Sad! Do you know how his father received him?"

"The first time it was in the camp near Berghen. His Serene Highness remarked: 'I do not see you often, my son,' and my master replied: 'If you have noticed it, it is very gratifying to me, my lord and father.' Then he gave to his Highness an account of his travels in the north; and his Serene Highness said: 'Well done.' The next day my master returned from the palace and said: 'They wish to marry me; but I must see my second father, General Levin.' I saddled the horses and here we are."

"Truly, my good Poël," said the general, with a tremor in his voice, "did he call me his second father?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"May misfortune follow me, if I forward a marriage against his inclinations, for I would sooner be in disgrace with the king than lend myself to it. But, however, the daughter of the grand chancellor of the two kingdoms! . . . By-the-way, Poël, does Ordener know that his future mother-in-law, the Countess d'Ahlefeld, has been here, incognito, since yesterday, and that the count is expected?"

“I do not know, general.”

“Oh!” said the old governor to himself, “yes, he knows it, for why did he beat a retreat directly he arrived?”

Here the general, after having made a kindly sign to Poël, and saluting the sentinel, who presented arms to him, retired into the palace with his mind as ill at ease as when he left it.

## V.

They say that every passion had agitated his heart, and that all had abandoned it; nothing remained to him but the sad and piercing recollections of a man perfect in the knowledge of men, and who could see, at a glance, the tendency of each thing.

SCHILLER—*Visions.*

When the stranger had ascended the spiral staircase and passed through the lofty rooms of the tower of the Lion of Sleswig, the usher opened, at last, the door of the apartment of the person whom he sought, the first words which greeted the young man's ears were these: "It is, at last, Captain Dispolson?"

This question came from an old man, who was seated with his back to the door, resting his elbows on the table, and with his face buried in his hands. He was wrapped in a black woolen robe, and one could see, over the bed at the other end of the room, a battered shield, around which were hung broken collars of the orders of the Elephant and the Danneborog; below the shield, a count's crown, reversed,

was fastened, and the two fragments of a hand of justice, bound together in the form of a cross, completed these extraordinary ornaments. The old man was Schumacker.

"No, sir," replied the usher; then he said to the stranger: "Here is the prisoner;" and, leaving them together, he closed the door, without hearing the shrill voice of the old man, who said: "If it is not the captain, I wish to see no one else."

The stranger, at these words, remained standing near the door; and the prisoner, thinking himself alone,—for he had not altered his position,—relapsed once more into silence.

All at once he burst forth: "The captain has certainly abandoned or betrayed me! Men . . . men are like icicles which the Arab took for a diamond; he stored it away in his pouch, and when he looked for it he found only a little water."

"I am not one of these men," said the stranger.

Schumacker hastily arose. "Who is here? who is listening? Is it some wretched tool of Guldenlew?"

"Do not speak ill of the viceroy, my lord count."

"My lord count! It is to flatter me that you call me thus? You lose your time; I am no longer in power."

“He who speaks to you never knew you in your days of power, but he is no less your friend.”

“Then he still hopes for something from me; one remembers the unfortunate just as long as one may hope for something from them.”

“It is I who ought to complain, noble count; for I recollect you, whilst you have forgotten me. I am Ordener.”

A look of pleasure flashed in the old man's sad eyes, and a smile which he could not repress shone through his white beard, like the rays which pierce a cloud.

“Ordener! You are welcome, explorer Ordener. A thousand good wishes to the traveler who remembers the prisoner!”

“But,” demanded Ordener, “you had then forgotten me?”

“I had forgotten you,” said Schumacker, relapsing into the same gloomy expression of countenance, “as one forgets the passing breeze which refreshes us; happy for us when it does not become a hurricane which overthrows us.”

“Count de Griffenfeld,” replied the young man, “you did not count upon my return.”

“The old Schumacker had lost count of it, but there is here a young girl who remarked to me only yesterday that on the 8th of May you had been gone a year.”

Ordener trembled with joy.

"What! Great heavens! could that be your Ethel, noble count?"

"Who, then, could it have been?"

"Your daughter, my lord, has deigned to count the months since I departed! oh! how many sad days I have passed! I have traveled through Norway, from Christiania to Wardhus; but my thoughts have always turned towards Drontheim."

"Make use of your liberty, young man, as long as you can. But tell me, now, who you really are. I wish, Ordener, to know you by another name. The son of my mortal enemy is called Ordener."

"Perhaps, my lord count, this mortal enemy has kindlier feelings for you than you have for him."

"You evade my question; but keep your secret, I shall perhaps find the fruit which refreshes me is a poison which will kill me."

"Count!" said Ordener irritably. "Count!" added he in tones of reproach and pity.

"Am I bound to trust you," replied Schumacker, "you, who always, in my presence, defend the implacable Guldenlew?"

"The viceroy," interrupted the young man gravely, "has just ordered that you shall have liberty to wander, without guards, through the interior of all the tower of the Lion of Sleswig.

It is a piece of news that I have learned at Berghen, and that you will receive, without doubt, shortly."

"It is a favor for which I dare not hope, and I believe that I have spoken of my desire to you alone. Yet they diminish the weight of my fetters in proportion as my years increase, and, when infirmities have rendered me helpless, they will doubtless say to me: You are free."

At these words the old man smiled bitterly and continued:

"And you, young man, have you still your foolish ideas of independence?"

"If I had never had these foolish ideas, I would not be here."

"How did you come to Drontheim?"

"Oh! on horseback."

"How did you come to Munckholm?"

"In a boat."

"Poor fool! Who thinks himself free, and who uses a horse and then a boat. It is not your limbs that execute your will; it is an animal, it is a material object; and you call that free will!"

"I compel others to obey me."

"To take upon yourself the right of being obeyed, is to give to others the right to command you. Independence is only found in isolation."



"You do not love mankind, noble count."

The old man gave a sad smile. "I grieve because I am a man, and I laugh at him who consoles me. You know it, if you are still unknown to it, that misfortune engenders distrust, as prosperity fosters ingratitude. Listen, you have just come from Berghen, tell me what favorable breeze has blown on Captain Dispolsen. Surely something fortunate has happened to him since he forgets me."

Ordener became sad and embarrassed.

"Dispolsen? my lord count, it is to speak to you about him that I came here to-day. I know that he had your full confidence."

"You know it?" interrupted the prisoner uneasily. "You are mistaken. No one in the world has my confidence. Dispolsen holds, it is true, important papers of mine. It is for me that he has gone to Copenhagen, to seek an audience of the king. I confess that I count more upon him than on all others, for in my prosperity I never rendered him a service."

"Well, noble count, I saw him yesterday."

"Your emotion tells me the rest, he is a traitor."

"He is dead."

"Dead!"

The prisoner folded his arms and bowed his head. Then fixing his eye on the young man :

“And just now I said to you that something fortunate had happened to him!”

Then he glanced towards the wall where were hung the insignia of his former grandeur, and made a gesture with his hand as though to banish from his sight a witness of his grief which he strove to vanquish.

“It is not him that I pity; it is only one man less. It is not myself; what have I to lose? But my daughter! my unfortunate daughter! I shall be the victim of this infamous plot; and what will become of her if they take away her father?”

He turned quickly to Ordener.

“How did he die? Where did you see him?”

“I saw him at the Spladgest; no one knows whether he died from suicide or assassination.”

“Now this is important. If he has been murdered, I know whence the blow came; then all is lost. He was to bring to me the proofs of the plot conspired against me; these proofs would have saved me and ruined them. They are cognizant of their destruction! Unfortunate Ethel!”

“My lord count,” replied Ordener bowing, “I will tell you to-morrow if he has been murdered.”

Schumacker, without replying, followed Ordener's retreating form with a look in which

was pictured the calmness of despair, more terrible to witness than the calmness of death.

Ordener was in the solitary ante-chamber, not knowing which way to turn. The evening was advancing and the room was in darkness; he opened a door and found himself in a long corridor, lighted only by the moon, sailing rapidly through light clouds. The dim light fell at intervals on the tall and narrow windows casting reflections on the opposite wall like a long procession of phantoms, which came and disappeared simultaneously in the gloom of the gallery. The young man crossed himself and walked towards a red light which faintly gleamed at the extremity of the corridors.

Through a half open door he saw a young girl kneeling at the foot of a simple altar in a Gothic chapel, reciting in a low voice the Litanies of the Virgin; a simple and sublime prayer in which the soul rises to the Mother of the Seven Sorrows to make intercessions.

The girl was dressed in black crape and white gauze, thus giving, at the first glance, the idea that her days had been passed in sadness and innocence. Even in this modest attitude, she showed in all her being the imprint of a singular nature. Her eyes and her long hair were of the deepest black, a style of beauty very rare in the north; her

face raised toward heaven seemed fired by ecstasy rather than subdued by retirement ; in short, she might well have been mistaken for a virgin from the shores of Cyprus, or from the plains around the Tiber, covered with the fantastic wings of Ossian, and prostrate before the wooden cross and stone altar of her Saviour.

Ordener trembled and was about to fall, for he recognized she who prayed.

She prayed for her father, for the mighty fallen, for the old deserted prisoner, and she recited aloud the psalm of deliverance.

She prayed for still another ; but Ordener did not hear the name of him for whom she prayed ; he did not hear it for she did not pronounce it ; she only repeated the Song of the Shulamite, the wife who longs for the coming of her lord and the return of the well beloved.

Ordener retreated into the gallery ; he respected this virgin in prayerful communication with her God ; prayer is a grand mystery, and his heart was filled, in spite of himself, with an unknown but profane delight.

The chapel door was gently closed. Soon a white figure holding a light came toward him. He stopped, for he felt one of the most violent emotions of his life ; he retreated

within the dark shadow of the wall; he trembled all over, and the bones of his limbs clashed in the sockets, and in the silence of all his being he could plainly hear the beating of his own heart.

As the girl passed, she heard the rustle of his coat, and the quick and heavy breathing.

"Great heavens!" she exclaimed.

Ordener rushed forward; with one arm he supported her, with the other he vainly tried to save the lamp, which she had let fall and which went out.

"It is I," said he, gently.

"Ordener!" said the girl, for the last echo of this voice which she had not heard for a year was still in her ear.

And the light of the passing moon lit up the joy of her countenance; as she replied, timid and confused, she disengaged herself from the young man's arms.

"It is Lord Ordener."

"'Tis he, Countess Ethel."

"Why do you call me countess?"

"Why do you call me lord?"

The girl was silent and smiled; the young man was silent and sighed. She was the first to speak:

"How is it that you are here?"

"Forgive me if my presence annoys you. I came to speak to the count, your father."

"Then," said Ethel in an altered voice, "you only came for my father's sake."

The young man bowed his head, for these words seemed very unjust to him.

"You have doubtless been a long time here," continued the girl in a reproachful tone. "A very long time in Drontheim? Your absence from the castle has not seemed long to you."

Ordener, deeply wounded, made no reply.

"I quite approve of your conduct," in a voice trembling with grief and rage; "but," added she, in a proud tone, "I hope, Lord Ordener, that you did not hear my prayers."

"Countess," replied the young man, "I did hear you."

"Ah! Lord Ordener, it was hardly courteous to listen."

"I did not listen to you, noble countess," said Ordener, faintly; "I heard you."

"I prayed for my father," said the girl, looking fixedly at him, and, as though waiting an answer to these simple words.

Ordener remained silent.

"I have also prayed," continued she, watching the effect which her words would produce on him, "I have also prayed for some one who bears your name, the son of the viceroy, Count Guldenlew. We must

include all the world in our prayers, even our persecutors."

The girl blushed, for she thought she lied ; but she was piqued against the young man, and she thought she had named him during her prayer ; she had not named him except in her heart.

"Ordener Guldenlew is very fortunate, noble lady, if you count him among your persecutors ; he is very happy, however, to occupy a place in your prayers."

"Oh ! no," said Ethel, troubled and alarmed at the young man's cold manner. "No, I was not praying for him. What have I said ; what am I doing ? As for the viceroy's son, I detest him, I do not know him. Do not look at me so severely ; have I offended you ? Can you not pardon a poor prisoner, you who pass your days near some beautiful and high-born lady, free and happy as yourself !"

"I, countess !" cried Ordener.

Ethel burst into tears ; the young man fell at her feet.

"Have you not told me," continued she, smiling through her tears, "that your absence has seemed short to you ?"

"Who, I, countess ?"

"Do not call me thus," said she gently. "I am countess to no one, more especially to you."



The young man rose and pressed her passionately to his heart.

“Ah! well, my adored Ethel, call me your Ordener. Tell me,”—and he cast a burning glance at her tear-stained eyes,—“tell me, then, that you love me!”

What the young girl said was unheard, for Ordener, beside himself, had taken from her lips, as she replied, the first favor; the sacred kiss which suffices, in the eyes of Heaven, to join two hearts in one.

Both remained silent, for it was one of those solemn moments so rare on earth, in which the soul feels something of the felicity of divine bliss. There are the indescribable moments when two souls commune in a language that none understand except themselves: all worldly thoughts disappear, and the immaterial existence unites them in a bond never to part on this earth, or in the life hereafter.

Ethel had gently withdrawn from Ordener's embrace, and, as the moon softly shone, they gazed at each with rapture; but Ordener's burning glances were full of manly pride and the boldness of a lion, whilst the half-veiled look upon the young girl's face bore the imprint of that angelic modesty which, in the virgin's heart, mingles with all the joys of love.

“You avoided me, then, just now in the corridor, my Ordener?”

“I was not avoiding you, I was like the blind man to whom sight has been suddenly restored after many years, and who turns away from the light of day.”

“Your comparison applies rather to me; for, during your absence, I had no other happiness than the presence of my poor unfortunate father. I passed the long days in consoling him, and,” added she, lowering her eyes, “in hoping for you. I read to my father legends of Edda, and when I heard him express want of faith in man, I read to him the Evangelists, that he might not distrust the ways of Heaven. Then I spoke to him of you, and he was silent—a proof that he likes you. Only, when I had passed my evenings vainly watching the roads by which travelers arrive, and the vessels which moored in the harbor, he would shake his head with a bitter smile and I wept. This prison, where my life had been passed, became odious to me, yet my father, who, until your appearance had been all the world to me, still remained so; but you were no longer here and I desired the liberty which I had known.”

There was, in the eyes of the young girl, in the naïvete of her tenderness, in the sweet hesitation in giving vent to her feelings, a charm which human words cannot describe.

Ordener listened with the dreamy joy of a being who had been removed from this world, to take part in an ideal.

"And I," said he, "do not care for the liberty of which you have no share!"

"What, Ordener!" exclaimed Ethel, quickly. "You will not leave again?"

This expression recalled to the young man what he had forgotten.

"My Ethel, I must leave you this evening, I shall see you to-morrow, and to-morrow I will leave you again, until I return never more to leave you."

"Alas!" she interrupted sadly, "again absent——"

"I repeat to you, my well beloved Ethel, that I will soon return, to rescue you from this prison or to share it with you."

"Prisoner with him!" said she softly. "Ah! do not deceive me, dare I hope for so much happiness?"

"What vows must I take? What would you have me do?" cried Ordener. "Tell me, my Ethel, are you not my wife?" Overcome with emotion, he clasped her closely to his breast.

"I am thine," murmured she feebly. These two noble and pure hearts beat together with delight, and nothing could have been nobler and purer.

At this moment a violent burst of laughter was heard close to them. A man wrapped in a cloak uncovered a dark lantern which he had hidden there, the brilliant light of which suddenly fell on the face of the frightened and confused Ethel and on the astonished and haughty visage of Ordener.

“Courage! my pretty couple! courage! but it seems to me that after having traveled so short a time in the land of tenderness you have not followed all the windings of the river of sentiment, and that you have taken a cross country cut to have arrived so quickly at the village of kissing.”

Our readers have, without doubt, recognized the lieutenant, admirer of Mademoiselle de Scudéry. Torn from the reading of “Clélie” by the midnight bell, which the two lovers had not heard, he had gone on his nightly round in the tower. In passing the eastern corridor, he had overheard some words, and seen by the light of the moon two spectral-like figures moving in the gallery. Then, being naturally curious and fearless, he had hidden his lantern under his coat, and was advancing on tiptoe toward the phantoms, whom his brusque burst of laughter had so unpleasantly aroused from their ecstasy. Ethel started to fly from Ordener; then, turning toward him as if by instinct to demand

protection, she buried her burning face upon his breast.

The latter raising her, with a kingly look, said :

“Woe ! woe be to him who has dared to frighten and wound thee, my Ethel !”

“Yes, truly,” said the lieutenant, “woe be to me if I have had the misfortune to alarm the tender madonna !”

“My lord lieutenant,” cried Ordener haughtily, “I counsel you to be silent.”

“My lord insolence,” replied the officer, “I counsel you to be silent.”

“Do you hear me ?” exclaimed Ordener in a voice of thunder ; “purchase your pardon by your silence.”

“*Tibi tua*,” responded the lieutenant ; “take your advice to yourself, buy your pardon by your silence.”

“Be silent !” cried Ordener, in a voice which made the windows rattle ; and, placing the trembling girl on one of the old chairs in the corridor, he roughly shook the officer’s arm.

“Oh ! peasant,” exclaimed the lieutenant, half laughing, half irritated. “You do not notice that the tunic you are so brutally crumpling is of the most beautiful Abingdon velvet.”

Ordener looked fixedly at him.

“Lieutenant, my patience is shorter than my sword.”

"I hear you, my brave spark," said the lieutenant with an ironical smile, "you are anxious I should do you the honor; but do you know whom I am? No, no, if you please, *Prince against prince, shepherd against shepherd*, as said the handsome Leander."

"If it must be said: Coward against coward!" retorted Ordener, "assuredly I shall not have the distinguished honor of crossing swords with you."

"I might feel annoyed, my most honorable shepherd, if you only wore a uniform."

"I have neither the braid nor the fringe, lieutenant, but I carry the sabre."

The haughty young man had thrown back his cloak, pressed his hat on his head, and grasped the hilt of his sabre, when Ethel, aroused by this imminent danger, threw herself into his arms, and, clasping hers around his neck, cried with terror and entreaty.

"You do wisely, beautiful lady, if you do not wish that this youngster be punished for his insolence," said the lieutenant, who, at Ordener's threats, had placed himself on guard without moving. "For Cyrus was going to quarrel with Cambyzes; that is, if it is not conferring too great an honor to compare this vassal to Cambyzes."

"In the name of Heaven! Lord Ordener," said Ethel, "I will not be the cause and the

witness of such a misfortune!" Then raising her beautiful eyes to his, she added: "Ordener, I entreat you!" Ordener slowly replaced in its sheath the half-drawn blade, and the lieutenant exclaimed:

"By my faith, chevalier, I do not know if you are one, but I give you the title, because you appear to deserve it, you and I are following the laws of the brave, but not those of gallantry. The lady is right, engagements such as those I consider you worthy to have with me, should not have women for witnesses, although—no offense to this charming lady—they may be the cause. We cannot, properly, speak here of anything but the *duellum remotum*. As the injured party, if you wish to fix the time, place and arms, my fine Toledo blade or my Merida dagger will be at the disposition of your chopping-blade sent out from the Ashkreuth forge, or your hunting-knife, tempered in Lake Sparbo."

The "postponed duel," which the officer proposed to Ordener, was the custom in the North, where *savants* pretend that the practice of dueling first started. The bravest noble-men proposed and accepted the *duellum remotum*. They postponed it for several months, sometimes several years, and, during this interval, the adversaries could neither speak of, nor act in the affair which had led to the

challenge. Thus, if it was a love affair, the rivals refrained from seeing their mistress, so that matters remained at a standstill; this was left to the honor of the chevaliers, as in the ancient tourneys, when the judges of the camp, if they thought the laws of courtesy had been violated, threw their batons into the arena; at this signal the combatants at once ceased; but, until all doubt was cleared, the sword of the conqueror remained suspended over the throat of the vanquished.

"Very well, chevalier," said Ordener, after a moment's reflection; "a messenger will instruct you as to the place."

"So be it," replied the lieutenant, "so much the better, for that will give me time to attend the ceremony of the marriage of my sister, for you must know that you are going to have the honor of fighting with the brother-in-law of a noble lord, Baron Ordener Guldenlew, son of the viceroy of Norway, who, on the occasion of this illustrious espousal, as Artamène says, will be created Count of Daneskiold, Colonel and Chevalier of the Order of the Elephant; and I, myself, who am the son of the Grand Chancellor of the two kingdoms, will, without doubt, be made a captain."

"Very well, very well, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld," said Ordener, impatiently, "you are



not yet a captain, nor is the son of the viceroy a colonel;—but sabres are always sabres.”

“And rustics are always rustics, whatever is done to raise them to our level,” muttered the officer between his teeth.

“Chevalier,” continued Ordener, “you know the laws of courtesy. You will not enter this donjon again, and you must keep silent about this affair.”

“As for silence, trust that to me, I will be as mute as Mutius Scævola, when he had his fist in the brazier. No more will I enter the donjon, neither I, nor any watchman of the garrison; for I have just received an order to allow Schumacker to go about unguarded, an order which I was instructed should be announced to him this evening; I would have done so had I not passed part of the evening trying on a new pair of boots from Cracow,—this order, between ourselves, is very imprudent,—would you like me to show you my boots?”

During this conversation, Ethel, seeing them both calmed, and not understanding that it was only a *duellum remotum*, had disappeared, after having softly whispered into Ordener’s ear: “To-morrow.”

“I wish, Lieutenant d’Ahlefeld, that you would aid me to get out of the fort.”

"Willingly," said the officer, "although it is a little late, or, rather, pretty early. But how will you find a boat?"

Then, conversing in a friendly manner, they crossed the garden, the circular court, the square court, without Ordener being conducted by the officer of the watch, experiencing many obstacles; they crossed the great portcullis, the artillery park, the parade ground, and arrived at the lower tower, the iron door of which opened at the voice of the lieutenant.

"Au revoir, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld!" said Ordener.

"Au revoir," replied the officer. "I swear you are a brave champion, although I do not know who you are, and if the seconds which you bring to our rendezvous have the right to claim relationship, they should not limit themselves to the modest title of assistants."

They shook hands; the door was closed, and the lieutenant, humming one of Lulli's airs, returned to admire his Polish boots and French romance.

Ordener remained alone on the threshold, took off his clothes, which he wrapped in his cloak and fastened them to his head with the belt of his sabre; then putting into practice Schumacker's principle of independence, he plunged into the calm, cold waters of the gulf,

and commenced, in the midst of the darkness, to swim towards the shore, and made towards the Spladgest, a destination he was certain of reaching, dead or alive.

The fatigues of the day had worn him out, so that he only reached the shore with difficulty. He hastily dressed himself and walked towards the Spladgest, which only appeared as a black mass in the square of the port; because, for some time, the moon had been entirely hidden.

On approaching this building he heard a noise like the sound of voices; a faint light came from an upper opening. Astonished, he knocked loudly at the door; the noise ceased, the light disappeared. He knocked again, the light in reappearing permitted him to see something dark go out by the upper opening and disappear on the flat roof of the building. Ordener knocked the third time with the hilt of his sabre, and cried, "Open, in the name of his majesty the king! open, by order of his Serene Highness the Viceroy."

At last the door opened slowly, and Ordener found himself face to face with the tall and pale form of Spiagudry, who, clothes disordered, haggard eyed, hair standing on end, and with bloody hands, carried a lamp whose flame trembled less visibly than his own large body.

## VI.

PIRRO.—Never !

ANGELO.—What ! I believe you wish to do good to man. Wretch ! If you say a single word. . . .

PIRRO.—But, Angelo, I swear to you, for the love of God. . . .

ANGELO.—Leave alone what you cannot prevent.

PIRRO.—Ah ! when the Devil holds you by the hair, you must abandon to him all your head. Unlucky me.

*Emilia Galloti.*

About an hour after the young traveler wearing the black plume had left the Spladgest, night had suddenly fallen and all the crowd dispersed, Oglypiglap had closed the outer door of the edifice, while his master, Spiagudry, for the last time threw water over the bodies lying there. Both then retired into their by no means sumptuous apartment, and whilst Oglypiglap slept on his little pallet, like one of the corpses confided to his charge, the venerable Spiagudry, seated before a stone table covered with old books, dried plants and fleshless bones, was deep in the grave studies which, though really innocent, had contributed

to give him, amongst the people, a reputation for sorcery and evil, annoying attribute of science at this epoch.

For several hours he had been absorbed in his meditations; and, at last, was leaving his books for his bed, when he was attracted by this weird sentence of Thor-modus Torfœus :

“When a man lights his lamp, death is with him before it can be extinguished.”

“No offense to the learned doctor,” said he in a low voice, “it shall not be this way with me this evening.”

He took up his lamp to blow it out.

“Spiagudry !” cried a voice which came from the chamber of the corpses.

The old guardian trembled in every limb. He did not believe, as others perhaps would have done, that the sad guests had risen against their guardian. He was learned enough not to have faith in imaginary fears; these were the more real since he recognized the voice which called him.

“Spiagudry !” repeated the voice angrily, “must I tear off your ears in order to make you hear me ?”

“May Saint Hospice have pity, not on my soul, but on my body,” said the terrified old man; and, with a step that fear hastened and slackened at the same time, he moved

toward the second door, which he opened. Our readers have not forgotten that this door communicated with the chamber of the dead.

The lamp which he carried revealed a strangely hideous picture. On the one side the long, lank, and bent figure of Spiagudry; on the other a little man, short and thickset, clothed from head to foot in skins of all sorts of animals still stained with blood, was standing at the foot of Gill Stadt's corpse, which, with those of the girl and the captain, occupied the centre of the scene, these three silent witnesses, laid out like a penumbra, were the only ones who could, without flying in terror, look at the two living ones with whom the conversation commenced.

The little man's features, which the light set off vividly, had about them something extraordinarily savage. His beard was red and bushy, and his forehead, hidden under an elkskin cap, appeared to be covered with hair of the same color; his mouth was large, his lips thick, his teeth white, pointed and separated; his nose curved like an eagle's beak; and his grayish blue eyes, extremely mobile, darted upon Spiagudry a sidelong look, in which the ferocity of the tiger was only tempered by the malice of the monkey.

This strange-looking person was armed with a long sabre, a sheathless dagger, and an axe

for cutting stone, on the long handle of which he was resting; his hands were covered with large gloves of blue fox skin.

“This old spectre has made me wait a long time,” said he, speaking to himself; and he made a noise like a beast of the woods.

Spiagudry would have certainly paled with fright, if he could have turned paler.

“Do you know,” continued the little man, addressing himself directly to him, “that I come straight from Urchtal Sands? Have you, then, wished to change your couch of straw for one of these stone couches?”

Spiagudry’s trembling increased, the only two teeth which he had chattered with fear.

“Pardon, master,” said he, arching his huge body so as to be on a level with the little man, “I was in a deep slumber.”

“Do you wish me to send you off into a far deeper sleep?”

Spiagudry made a grimace of terror, which was almost pleasanter than his grimaces of gaiety.

“Well! what is it?” continued the little man. “What is the matter? Is it that my presence is not agreeable?”

“Oh! my lord and master,” replied the old guardian, “there is for me no greater happiness than the sight of your excellency.”

And the effort which he made to give to his terrified countenance a smiling expres-

sion, would have caused all but the dead to laugh.

“ You old tailless fox, my excellency orders you to give me Gill Stadt’s clothes.”

In pronouncing this name the little man’s fierce and mocking expression became melancholy and sad.

“ Oh ! master, pardon me, I no longer have them,” said Spiagudry ; “ your grace knows that we are obliged to deliver to the royal treasury the spoils from the miners, which the king inherits in his rank as their born guardian.”

The little man turned toward the corpse, crossed his arms, and said in a low voice : “ He is right. These miserable miners are like the eiderduck<sup>2</sup> ; we make nests for them only to steal their down.”

Then, raising the corpse in his arms and embracing it firmly he gave a savage cry of love and grief, similar to the growling of a bear caressing its young. These inarticulate sounds were mingled, at intervals, with some words of a strange jargon which Spiagudry did not understand.

He let the corpse fall back on the stone and turned toward the guardian.

“ Do you know, accursèd sorcerer, the name of the soldier born under an unlucky star, who has had the misfortune to be preferred to Gill by this girl ? ”



And he kicked the cold remains of Guth Stersen.

Spiagudry made a negative sign.

“Ah, well! By the axe of Ingulphus, the chief of my race, I will exterminate all the wearers of that uniform,” and he pointed to the officer’s clothes. “He of whom I wish vengeance will be found in the number. I will burn all the forest in order to burn the one venomous shrub it contains. I have sworn it on the day of Gill’s death; and I have already given to him a companion which should rejoice his soul. Oh, Gill! there you are without life or motion, you who could outstrip the seal, the chamois in its course, you who could strangle any bear of the Kolo Mountains in a struggle; there you lie motionless, you who could run the Drontheimhus from Orkel all the way to Lake Smiasen in a day, you who could mount the peaks of Dofre-Field as a squirrel runs up an oak, there you are speechless, Gill, you, who, standing on the summit of stormy Konigsberg, could sing higher than the thunder. Oh, Gill! it was then in vain that I destroyed the mines of Faroë for your sake; it was in vain that I burned the cathedral of Drontheim; all my labor has been lost, and I will not see perpetuated in you the race of the children of Iceland, the descendants of Ingulphus the exterminator;

you will not inherit my stone axe; on the contrary, you have left me your skull from which to drink the waters of the sea and the blood of men."

At these words he seized the head of the corpse.

"Spiagudry," said he, "help me." And throwing off his gloves he showed his huge hands armed with long nails, hard and bent like those of a wild beast.

Spiagudry, who saw he was ready to sever the corpse's skull with his sabre, cried with an accent of horror, which he could not suppress:

"Righteous heavens! Master! a dead man!"

"Oh, well!" tranquilly replied the little man, "would you prefer that this blade be sharpened here on a live one?"

"Oh! permit me to entreat your excellency . . . how can your excellency profane? . . . Your Grace . . . my lord, your serenity would not . . ."

"Have you finished! Have I need of all these titles, living skeleton, to believe in your profound respect for my sabre?"

"By Saint Waldemar, by Saint Usuph, in the name of Saint Hospice, spare the dead!"

"Keep me, and do not speak of saints to the devil."

“My lord,” continued the suppliant Spiagudry, “by your illustrious ancestor, Saint Ingulphus !”

“Ingulphus the exterminator was a reprobate like myself.”

“In the name of Heaven,” said the old man, falling on his knees, “it is this reproach that I wish to spare you.”

The little man now lost all patience. His stern gray eyes flashed like burning coals.

“Help me !” repeated he, brandishing his sabre. These two words were pronounced with a voice like that of a lion, if he were able to speak.

The guardian, trembling and half dead, seated himself on the black stone, and held in his hands Gill's cold and clammy head, whilst the little man with the help of his dagger and sabre, separated the skull with a singular dexterity.

When this operation was finished he gazed for some time at the bloody skull, addressing strange words to it ; then he handed it to Spiagudry to scrape and wash it, and said, with a kind of howl : “And I shall not, in dying, have the consolation of knowing that an heir with the spirit of Ingulphus will drink from my skull the blood of men or the waters of the sea.”

After a sinister reverie, he continued :

“The hurricane is followed by the hurricane, the avalanche brings down avalanche,

and I shall be the last of my race. Why did not Gill hate, as I, all who have a humane face? What demon, enemy of the demon Ingulphus has driven him to enter these fatal mines in search of a little gold?"

Spiagudry, who brought back Gill's skull, interrupted him. "Your excellency is right; 'gold itself, says Snorro Sturleson, is often bought too dear.'"

"You recall to my mind," said the little man, "a commission with which I must charge you; here is an iron box that I found on that officer, from whom you have not, as you see, secured all the spoil; it is so firmly closed, that it ought to contain gold, the only thing precious in the eyes of men; you take it to the widow Stadt, in the hamlet of Thoc-tree, to repay for her loss."

He then drew from his bag of reindeer skins a very small iron box. Spiagudry received it and bowed.

"Fulfil my order faithfully," said the little man, giving him a piercing look; "remember that nothing prevents two demons from meeting again; I believe that you are more of a coward than a miser, and you are answerable to me for this casket."

"Oh! master, on my soul."

"Not so! on your bones and on your flesh."

At this moment, the outer door of the Spladgest was struck a violent blow. The little man looked astonished, Spiagudry started, and covered his lamp with his hand.

"What is that?" grumbled the little man. . . . "And you, old witch, how you will tremble when you hear the trumpets of the last judgment."

A second knock, louder than before, was heard. "It is some corpse in a hurry to enter," said the little man.

"No, master," murmured Spiagudry, "they do not bring dead bodies after midnight."

"Dead or living, he drives me away. You, Spiagudry, be faithful and silent. I swear to you, by the spirit of Ingulphus and by Gill's skull, that you will review, in your inn, corpses of all the regiment of Munckholm."

And the little man, attaching Gill's skull to his girdle and putting on his gloves, sprang with the agility of the chamois and the aid of Spiagudry's shoulders, through the opening in the roof, and disappeared.

A third blow resounded through the Spladgest, and a voice from without ordered it to be opened in the name of the king and the viceroy. Then the old guardian, by this time excited by two different terrors, one of which could be called remembrance, and the other hope, started towards the square door, and opened it.

## VII.

The joy of temporal happiness is dissipated in the seeking, by regrets and sorrow, without ever having been reached.

*Confessions of Saint Augustin.*

Entering his study after having left Poël, the Governor of Drontheim seated himself in a large arm-chair, and ordered, by way of distraction, one of his secretaries to read to him the petitions presented to the government.

The latter, after bowing, commenced :

“ 1. The Reverend Doctor Anglyvius petitions that he may succeed the Reverend Doctor Foxtipp, Director of the Episcopal Library, for reason of incapacity. The petitioner does not know who is able to replace the said incapable doctor; he only knows that he, Doctor Anglyvius, has for a long time exercised the functions of librarian . . . ”

“ Refer this rogue to the bishop,” interrupted the general.

“ 2. Althanase Munder, priest, prison chaplain, begs for the pardon of twelve penitent criminals, on the occasion of the glorious

wedding of his civility Ordener Guldenlew, Baron of Thorwick, Chevalier of Danneborog, son of the viceroy, with the noble lady Ulrica d'Ahlefeld, daughter of his Grace, the Count Grand Chancellor of the two kingdoms."

"Adjourn," said the general. "I pity the criminals."

"3. Fauste Prudens Destrombides, Norwegian subject, latin poet, begs to compose the epithalamium of the said noble pair."

"Ah! ah! the good man must have grown old, for he is the same man who, in 1674, wrote an epithalamium on the proposed marriage between Schumacker, then Count of Griffenfeld, and the Princess Louise Charlotte of Holstein-Augustenburg, which never took place. I fear," added the governor to himself, "that Fauste Prudens is the poet of broken-off marriages. Adjourn the petition, and continue. With regard to the poet, we must see if there is not a vacancy at Drontheim Asylum."

"4. The miners from Guldbranshal, the Faroe Isles, of Sund Moer, of Hubfalls, of Rœraas, and of Königsberg, petition to be free from the royal tax."

"These miners are dissatisfied. It is said that they are already murmuring at the long silence maintained with regard to their

petition. Let it be put aside for careful examination."

"5. Braall, fisherman, petitions in virtue of the Odelsrecht<sup>3</sup>, that he may repurchase his holdings."

"6. The Syndics of Nœs, Lœvig, Indal, Skongen, Stod, Sparbo, and other towns and villages in the Northern Drontheimhus, petition that a price be put on the head of the brigand, assassin, and incendiary Han, a native it is said of Klipstadur, in Iceland. A counter petition from Nyehol Orugix, executioner of the Drontheimhus, who maintains that Han is his property. He is seconded by Benignus Spiagudry, guardian of the Spladgest, who should receive the corpse."

"This brigand is a dangerous fellow," said the general, "particularly when a revolt among the miners is to be feared. Let it be proclaimed that a reward of a thousand royal crowns will be paid for his head."

"7. Benignus Spiagudry, doctor, antiquary, sculptor, mineralogist, naturalist, botanist, lawyer, chemist, mechanician, physician, astronomer, theologian, grammarian——"

"Well, well!" interrupted the general, "is not this the same Spiagudry who is the guardian of the Spladgest?"

"Yes, your excellency," replied the secretary, continuing, "guardian for his majesty



of the royal establishment called the *Spladgest*, situated in the town of Drontheim, maintains that he, Benignus Spiagudry, who discovered that the planets are not illumined by the sun, *item*, that the true name of Odin is *Frigge*, son of *Fidulph*; *item*, that the lot-worm feeds on sand; *item*, that the noise of the populace drives the fish away from the coast of Norway, so that the means of subsistence diminish in proportion to the increase of the people; *item*, that the gulf called Otte-Sund used to be called *Limfiord* and was given the name of Otte-Sund only after Othon of Roux had his lance into it; *item*, and it was by his advice and under his direction that the old statue of Freya now represents the statue of Justice, which ornaments the large square at Drontheim; and that the lion at the base of the idol has been effaced to give place to a devil, the picture of crime; *item*, . . .”

“Spare us a further record of his eminent services. What does he want?”

The secretary turned over several sheets, and continued:

“The humble servant, in virtue of the many works he has contributed to science and literature, petitions that your excellency will augment the price given for every corpse, both male and female, ten ascalins—which can only please the dead, as it would prove the value set upon them.”

At this moment the door was thrown open, and the usher announced in a loud voice, *the noble lady, the Countess d'Ahlefeld.*

At the same time a tall lady, wearing a countess' coronet on her head, richly dressed in scarlet satin, bordered with ermine and gold fringe, entered, and, taking the general's proffered hand, seated herself near to him.

The countess was about fifty years of age. Pride and ambition had left their traces on her face, adding years to her looks, which time might have spared.

"Well, my lord general," she turned towards the old governor, with her scornful and false glance, "your pupil is keeping us waiting; he was to be here before sunset."

"He would have been here, countess, had he not gone to Munckholm soon after his arrival."

"What, to Munckholm? I hope he has not gone in search of Schumacker."

"It is quite possible."

"The Baron of Thorwick's first visit to be paid to Schumacker!"

"Why not, countess? Schumacker is unhappy."

"Do you mean to say, general, that the viceroy's son is in league with this state prisoner?"

“Frederick Guldenlew, in placing his son under my charge, noble lady, asked me to bring him up as I would my own. I considered Schumacker’s acquaintance would be useful to Ordener, who will occupy a high position. With the viceroy’s consent I obtained from my brother, Grummond de Knud, the right of entry to all the prisons, and I gave Ordener the written permission of which he has availed himself.”

“How long is it, noble general, since Baron Ordener made this useful acquaintance?”

“More than a year ago, countess; he must have found pleasure in Schumacker’s society, judging from the length of his visit to Drontheim; and it was only with regret and at my express wish that he left last year to make a tour of Norway.”

“Does Schumacker know that his consoler is the son of one of his bitterest enemies?”

“He knows him to be a friend, and that is sufficient for him, as it would be for us.”

“But you, my lord general,” said the countess, with a penetrating glance, “were you aware, when tolerating, or rather, forwarding, this intimacy, that Schumacker has a daughter?”

“I knew it, countess.”

“And you consider this a matter of indifference to your pupil?”

“Levin de Knud’s ward, Frederick Guldenlew’s son, is a man of honor. Ordener knows the barrier which separates him from Schumacker’s daughter, and he is incapable of dishonorably courting any girl, particularly the daughter of an unfortunate man.”

The noble Countess d’Ahlefeld blushed, and then becoming pale, turned her head aside, in order to avoid the old man’s accusing look.

“At all events,” she stammered, “you must allow me to say, general, that I consider this acquaintance both singular and imprudent. They say that the miners and the people in the north threaten to revolt, and that Schumacker is compromised in this affair.”

“Noble lady, you surprise me !” exclaimed the governor. “Schumacker has calmly borne his misfortunes until now. This rumor is doubtless without foundation.”

The usher at this moment appeared at the door to say that a messenger had arrived, from his grace the grand chancellor, for the noble countess.

The lady rose hurriedly, bowed, and, leaving the governor to continue his work, she hastened to her own apartments, situated in a wing of the palace, and ordered the messenger to be brought before her.

She was seated in the midst of her ladies-in-waiting, when the envoy entered. The

countess cast a look of involuntary repugnance toward him, which she hastened to hide under a smile. At the first glance, the new-comer presented anything but a repulsive appearance. He was of medium height, his corpulency denoting anything but a messenger. On a closer inspection, the openness of his face was really insolence, and his jovial manner concealed something diabolical and sinister. He bowed profoundly to the countess and presented her with a packet sealed with silken cord.

"Noble lady," said he, "permit me to place at your feet a precious message from his grace, your illustrious husband, my respected master."

"Is he not coming himself? and why is it he makes you his messenger?" asked the countess.

"Matters of importance detained his grace; this letter will explain all. My noble master desired me to speak to you in private."

The countess turned pale, and exclaimed, in trembling accents:

"A private interview with you, Musdœmon?"

"If this causes the noble lady any annoyance, her unworthy servant will be in despair."

"Annoyance! oh, not at all," replied the countess, forcing a smile; "but is this interview really necessary?"

The envoy bowed to the ground.

"Absolutely necessary! The letter the illustrious countess has deigned to receive at my hands expresses the formal injunction."

It was a strange sight to see the haughty Countess d'Ahlefeld tremble and grow pale before one of the retinue, who treated her with such profound respect. She leisurely unfastened the packet, and read the contents. After another perusal, she turned to the ladies, saying, in a faint voice :

"Leave me ; I would be alone."

"Deign, noble lady," said the messenger, bending the knee before her, "to pardon the liberty I dare to take, and the annoyance I am causing you."

"On the contrary," answered the countess, with a forced smile, "I am happy to see you."

The ladies retired.

"Elphège, have you forgotten the time when a tête-à-tête with me was not repugnant to you?"

These words came from the messenger to the noble countess. They were accompanied by a laugh such as Satan would give when the compact has expired and he claims the soul which is given to him.

The noble lady bent her humiliated head.

"Would that I had forgotten !" she murmured.

“Poor, foolish thing. Why do you blush for what no human eye has seen?”

“Men may not see, but God sees.”

“God? Weak woman! You are not worthy of having deceived your husband, for he is less credulous than you are.”

“You show little generosity by ridiculing my remorse, Musdœmon.”

“Well, then, Elphège, if so, why do you insult them daily by committing fresh crimes?”

The Countess d’Ahlefeld hid her face in her hands, and the messenger continued:

“Elphège, you must take your choice—either remorse and no more crimes, or the crime and no more remorse. Do as I have done, choose the latter—it is far the best, and decidedly the more cheerful.”

“It is to be hoped,” said the countess, in a low tone, “you will not find these words in eternity.”

“Now, my dear, quit joking.”

Musdœmon took a seat near the countess, and passed his arm round her neck, saying:

“Elphège, try to be the same in spirit as you were twenty years since.”

The unfortunate countess, the slave of her accomplice, tried to respond to this degrading caress. There was something too revolting in the adulterous embraces of these two beings, who despised and execrated each other, even

to the fallen creatures themselves. Forbidden endearments, which had once been their joy—now they enforced them upon each other—became torture. The just and strange change of guilty affection. Their crime became its own punishment.

The countess, to shorten her sufferings, asked her odious lover, as she released herself from his clasp, what verbal message her husband had given him.

“D’Ahlefeld,” said Musdœmon, “at the very moment he was about to strengthen his influence by the marriage of Ordener Guldenlew with our daughter ——”

“Our daughter!” exclaimed the haughty countess, with a look of pride and disdain at Musdœmon.

“Well,” replied the envoy coolly, “I think Ulrica belongs to me at least as much as to him. I was telling you that this marriage will not alone satisfy your husband, if he cannot at the same time compass Schumacker’s complete downfall. This old favorite, from the depths of his prison, is almost as much to be feared as he was in his palace. He has some friends in the dark at court, the more powerful, perhaps, from their very obscurity. The king, hearing about a month since that the grand chancellor’s negotiations with the Duke of Holstein-Ploen were at a



stand-still, exclaimed, impatiently: 'Griffenfeld knew as much as all of them put together.' A plotter named Dispolsen, who had come from Munckholm to Copenhagen, had several audiences with his majesty, after which the king sent for all the deeds deposited with the chancellor, relating to Schumacker's titles and property. At present, we are not aware what Schumacker aims at. If he but asks for liberty, that to a State prisoner means power. He must die, and it must be done in judicial form. We are endeavoring to convict him of some crime. Your husband, Elphège, under pretext of inspecting the Northern Provinces, has gone *incognito* among the miners, whom we are secretly urging to insurrection, in the name of Schumacker, which it will afterward be easy to quell. We are anxious about the loss of several important documents relating to the plan, which we believe are in Dispolsen's hands. Knowing that he had left Copenhagen for Munckholm, taking back Schumacker's parchments, diplomas, and perhaps the very papers that would be our death-blow, or at least compromise us, we posted some faithful servants in the passes of the Kole Mountains, with instructions to make away with him after having robbed him of his documents. But, if, as I am told, Dispolsen came to Berghen by sea, we have gained nothing

for our pains. Yet, on my arrival here, I heard it rumored that a Captain Dispolsen had been murdered. We will see. We are also in search of a famous brigand, called Han of Iceland, whom we wish to place at the head of the insurgents. And now, my dear, what news have you for me? Has the pretty bird of Munckholm been taken alive in her cage?—has the old chancellor's daughter yet fallen a prey to our falcon? Has our son Frederick ——"

The countess' pride was again roused, and she exclaimed :

"Our son!"

"Well, let me see, how old is he? Twenty-four. Why, we are old friends of twenty-six years' standing, Elphège."

"God knows," cried the countess, "that my Frederick is the grand chancellor's legitimate heir."

"If God knows it," answered the messenger, jeering, "the devil may still be in ignorance. Your Frederick is a harum-scarum fellow, unworthy of me. Why should we quarrel for such a trifle? He is only good for seducing a girl. Has he succeeded yet?"

"Not yet, so far as I know."

"Elphège, you are far too passive in all affairs relating to the count and myself, which are certainly active enough now.

To-morrow I return to your husband. Do not confine yourself simply to prayers for pardon of our sins, as the Italians invoke the Madonna previous to committing a murder. I expect a far greater reward from 'd' Ahlefeld than he has hitherto bestowed upon me. My fortune is linked with yours, but I am tired of being the husband's servant, when I am the wife's lover, and of being nothing but governor, preceptor and pedagogue, when I am almost father."

The clock struck the midnight hour, and one of the attendants entered, reminding the countess that, according to the rules of the palace, all lights should be extinguished at that time. The countess, only too delighted to bring this painful interview to an end, summoned her attendants.

"May I be allowed, noble countess," said Musdoemon, retiring, "to have the honor of seeing you to-morrow, to pay my most respectful homage?"

## VIII.

It cannot be but thou hast murdered him,  
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

*Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III., Scene 2.

SHAKESPEARE.

"Old man, with all due deference," said Ordener to Spiagudry, "I began to think that the bodies lodged in this building were charged to open the door."

"Pardon me, my lord," replied the guardian, the words king and viceroy still ringing in his ears and making his usual trifling excuse, "I—I was sleeping heavily."

"In that case it is evident your corpses do not sleep, for I distinctly heard them talking just now."

Spiagudry was confused.

"Then, sir stranger, you overheard?"

"Good heavens! well, yes; but what can it matter? I have not come here about your affairs, but concerning my own. Let us go in."

Spiagudry was by no means anxious the new-comer should see the state of Gill's body;

but the last words reassured him, and besides, how could he help himself?

He therefore allowed the young man to enter, and closed the door.

"Benignus Spiagudry," he said, "is at your service for all that concerns human science. If, judging from your late visit, you believe you are addressing yourself to a sorcerer, you are in error; *ne faman credas*; I am only a scholar. Let us enter, sir stranger, to my laboratory."

"Not so," said Ordener; "I wish to remain on account of these bodies."

"Of these bodies!" exclaimed Spiagudry, trembling. "My lord, you cannot see them."

"What! do you mean to say that I cannot see the bodies which are exposed there for public inspection? Must I repeat that I require you to give me some information respecting one or the other? Your duty is to answer. Obey me with a good grace, old man, or you obey me by force."

Spiagudry held sabres in profound respect, and he saw the glitter of one at Ordener's side.

"*Nihil non arrogat armis*," muttered he. Taking up his keys, he opened the low grating, and introduced the stranger into the inner division of the room.

"Show me the captain's clothes," said the latter.

At this moment the light fell on Gill Stadt's mutilated remains.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Ordener; "what horrible profanation!"

"Great Saint Hospice, have pity on me," murmured the old guardian.

"Old man," continued Ordener, in threatening tones, "is death so far off that you dare to disrespect its sanctity? Are you not afraid, you wretched creature, lest the living should teach you how to honor the dead?"

"Oh!" cried the poor guardian, "have mercy; it was not I—if you only knew . . ." He suddenly stopped, for he remembered the little man's words: "Be faithful and silent." "Did you ever see any one leave by this outlet?" he inquired, in a faint voice.

"Yes; was it your accomplice?"

"No; it was the criminal himself—the only guilty party. I swear it by all the powers of hell, by all the blessings of Heaven, by this corpse that has been so shamefully profaned," said he, throwing himself on the stones before Ordener.

Hideous as Spiagudry was, there was an accent of truth in his despairing protestations which convinced the young man.

"Old man," said he, "arise. If you have not outraged the dead, do not debase your old age."

The guardian arose, Ordener continued :

“Who is the criminal?”

“Oh! silence, noble sir; you are ignorant of whom you are speaking. Silence!”

And Spiagudry inwardly repeated, “Be faithful and silent.”

Ordener repeated coldly :

“Who is the criminal? I will know his name.”

“In the name of Heaven, my lord, do not say so. Be quiet, for fear of . . .”

“Fear shall not silence me, but it shall make you speak.”

“Excuse me, pardon me, my young master,” cried the distracted Spiagudry, “I cannot.”

“You can, and you shall name the mutilator.”

Spiagudry tried to evade the question.

“Noble sir, the mutilator of that corpse is the officer’s murderer.”

“The officer then was murdered?” asked Ordener, recalled by this speech to the object of his researches.

“Yes, without doubt, my lord.”

“And by whom, by whom?”

“By the saint that your mother invoked at your birth, do not seek to learn his name, my young master, and force me not to reveal it.”

"If anything could increase the interest I have in knowing it, you have certainly added to it. I command you to give up the name of the murderer."

"Well, then, look at the appearance of the unfortunate corpse. You will see how the flesh has been torn by long and sharp claws," said Spiagudry. "These should tell you the murderer's name."

And the old man showed to Ordener the severe and jagged wounds made upon the nude corpse.

"Do you mean," said Ordener, "that he was attacked by some wild beast?"

"No, my young lord."

"But, unless it was the devil . . ."

"Hush! lest you should guess rightly. Have you never heard," continued the guardian, in a low tone, "of a man, or rather, monster, with a human face, whose nails are as long as those of Astaroth, the cause of our downfall, or of the Antichrist, who in the future will be so?"

"Speak more clearly."

"'Woe be!' says the Scripture . . ."

"I am asking you for the murderer's name."

"The murderer—the name—my lord—have pity upon me, have pity on yourself."

"Your last prayer would prevent my heeding the first, even if I were not actuated by



far graver reasons in forcing you to give up this name. Do not overtax my patience."

"As you insist upon it, young man," said Spiagudry, drawing himself together, "this murderer, this mutilator, is Han of Iceland."

This much-dreaded name was not unknown to Ordener.

"What!" he exclaimed, "Han, the execrable bandit?"

"Do not call him a bandit, for he always lives alone."

"Ah! miserable wretch, how is it you know him? What crimes have been the link between you?"

"Oh, noble master, do not judge by appearances. Is the trunk of the oak poisoned because it sometimes shelters the serpent?"

"No more idle words! the friend of a villain is always his accomplice."

"I am not his friend, and far less his accomplice. If the oaths I have sworn have failed to convince you, pray consider what this infamous mutilation entails upon me in the next twenty-four hours, when they come to remove Gill Stadt's body. I shall be accused of sacrilege, and pass the most fearful time an innocent man ever had to undergo."

These personal considerations had far more weight upon Ordener than the poor guardian's supplications, who had probably been guided

by the former feeling when making a resistance to the little man's sacrilegious onslaught. During the moment Ordener was considering, Spiagudry watched his face most anxiously for the signs of peace or war.

At last he said, in a severe but calm tone, "Old man, be truthful. Did you find any papers on that officer?"

"None, on my honor."

"Do you know if Han of Iceland found any?"

"I swear to you by Saint Hospice that I am ignorant of the fact."

"You know nothing about it? Can you tell me where Han hides himself?"

"He never hides—he is always wandering."

"That may be; but where are his haunts?"

"The pagan," replied the old man in a low tone, "has as many haunts as the Island of Hitteran has reefs, or the star Sirius has rays."

"Again I must urge you," interrupted Ordener, "to speak more positively. I will show you the example; listen to me. You are linked in some mysterious way with this brigand, if, as you maintain, you are not the accomplice. If you know him, you must be aware where he is to be found. Do not interrupt me; if you are not his accomplice, you will not hesitate to guide me in my researches for him."

Spiagudry could not conceal his terror.

"You, my noble lord—you, great heavens! so full of youth and life, will you provoke and seek out this fiend? When Ingiald with the four arms fought the giant Nyctolm, at least he had four arms."

"Well," said Ordener, smiling, "if four arms are necessary, will you not then be my guide?"

"I, your guide? How can you jeer a poor old man, who has need of a guide himself?"

"Listen," continued Ordener, "and do not try to deceive me. If this profanation, of which I am willing to believe you innocent, exposes you to the penalty for sacrilege, you cannot remain here; you must fly. I offer you my protection, on condition that you show me the brigand's retreat. Be my guide, and I will be your guardian. I will even say more: if Han of Iceland comes within my reach, I will bring him back dead or alive. You can then prove your innocence, and I promise you shall be restored to your position. Meanwhile, here are more royal écus than he will bring in a year."

Ordener, by keeping the purse to the last, had maintained in his arguments the various gradations according to the principles of logic. This reasoning had great weight with Spiagudry. He began by taking the money.

"Noble master, you are right," said he, looking for the first time full at Ordener. "If I follow you, I expose myself to the vengeance of the formidable Han. If I remain here, to-morrow I shall be handed over to Orugix, the executioner. What is the penalty for sacrilege? Not that it matters. In either case, my wretched life is in peril; but according to wise remarks of Sæmond-Sigfusson's, otherwise termed the sage, '*inter duo pericula æqualia, minus imminens eligendum est*,' I will follow you. Yes, my lord, I will be your guide. Pray do not forget that I have done my utmost to dissuade you from this adventure."

"Very well," said Ordener. "You are, then, my guide;" adding, with a piercing look, "I reckon upon your fidelity."

"Ah, master," replied the guardian, "Spiagudry's faith is as pure as the gold you have just given me so graciously."

"It could not be otherwise. I will prove to you that my steel is quite as pure as my gold. Where do you think Han of Iceland can be?"

"As the south of the Drontheimhus is filled with troops, sent there at the grand chancellor's expressed request, Han has doubtless made his way either to the grotto Walderhog or to lake Smiasen. We must take the road through Skongen."

“When can you follow me?”

“After the day which is just beginning; when night is near and the Spladgest is closed, your humble servant will be ready to enter upon his duties as guide, and the dead will thus be deprived of his care. I shall take precautions to-day to conceal from all the mutilation of the miner’s corpse.”

“Where shall I find you this evening?”

“In the grand square of Drontheim, near the statue of Justice, formerly styled Freya, beneath whose shades I shall doubtless find protection, if only from gratitude for the handsome devil I had sculptured at its base.”

Spiagudry was about to give a verbal report of his petition to the governor, when Ordener interrupted him:

“That is quite sufficient, old man. Our compact is agreed.”

“Yes, it is agreed,” repeated the guardian.

He had just spoken this word when a distinct growl was heard overhead. The keeper trembled.

“What’s that?” said he.

“Are there any other living beings here besides ourselves?” Ordener inquired, equally surprised.

“You remind me of my assistant, Oglypig-lap,” replied Spiagudry, reassured by this

idea. "He is no doubt snoring. 'A Lapp sleeping,' says Bishop Arngrin, 'makes as much noise as a woman when awake.'"

While thus talking, they reached the door of the Spladgest. Spiagudry opened it quietly.

"Farewell, my young master. May Heaven help you until this evening. Should you be near the cross of Saint Hospice, deign to offer up a prayer for your wretched servant, Benignus Spiagudry."

Hastily closing the door, as much from the fear of being seen as to protect the lamp from the morning breeze, he turned his attention to Gill's corpse and shifted the head to a position which helped to conceal the mutilation.

Many reasons had actuated the timid guardian in accepting the stranger's adventurous offer. I. The fear of Ordener himself. II. The dread of the executioner, Orugix. III. Hatred of Han of Iceland—a feeling he was terrified at even owning to himself. IV. A love of science, the knowledge of which would be increased by this journey. V. Confidence in his own cunning, shielding him from Han's vengeance. VI. A special interest in certain metal to be found in the young adventurer's purse, and evidently also in the iron casket stolen from the captain, and

destined for Widow Stadt, which now ran the risk of never leaving the messenger's hands.

And lastly, he entertained the hope of being sooner or later re-established in the position he was about to abandon. What mattered it to him if the brigand killed the traveler, or the latter killed the brigand? At this point in his reverie he could not help saying aloud :

" Besides, in any case, I shall be the gainer of one corpse."

Another growl was heard, which made the miserable guardian shake with fright.

" That is certainly not Oglypiglap snoring," said he to himself. " That noise comes from outside."

Then, after a moment of reflection :

" But how foolish I am to be nervous ; it is only some dog who has just wakened and is barking on the quay."

He then finished arranging Gill's body, and, after closing all doors, he sought his own pallet, to repose from the fatigues of the night, and to strengthen himself for those to come.

## IX.

JULIET.—O, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

ROMEO.—I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve

For sweet discourses in our time to come.

*Romeo and Juliet*, Act III., Scene 5.

SHAKESPEARE.

Munckholm Castle beacon had just gone out, and in its place the sailor entering Drontheim Gulf could see the sentinel's helmet shining from the distance in the rays of the sun like a fixed star, when Schumacker, leaning on his daughter's arm, came down, according to his usual custom, in the garden surrounding the prison. Both had passed restless nights—the old man from sleeplessness, the young girl from delightful dreams. They walked in silence for some time, the old captive watching his daughter with a grave and mournful look.

“You blush and smile to yourself, Ethel. You are happy; for you have nothing to blush at in the past, and you can smile at the future.”



Ethel flushed deeply, and ceased to smile.

"My lord and father," said she, greatly confused, "I have brought your book, the Edda."

"Very well, child; then read it to me," said Schumacker, relapsing into reverie.

Then the mournful captive, seated on a rock beneath the shade of a black fir, listened to the young girl's sweet voice without taking in the sense of reading, as the thirsty traveler listens to the murmuring of the brook which means life to him.

Ethel read the story of the shepherdess Allanga, who refused to accept a king's offer until he had proved himself to be a warrior. Prince Regner Lodbrog, having vanquished the brigand of Klipstadur, Ingulphus the Exterminator, claimed the hand of the shepherdess.

Suddenly there came the sound of footsteps on the fallen leaves, interrupting the reader, and arousing Schumacker from his reverie. Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld made his appearance before them. Ethel bent down her head on recognizing her continual visitor, and the officer spoke:

"Upon my word, beautiful lady, the name of Ingulphus the Exterminator pronounced by your charming lips! I heard it and I suppose you were speaking of his grandson, Han of Iceland—that recalled him to your memory?

Young ladies have a fancy for speaking about brigands. Many agreeable stories, and some terrible ones, are related of Ingulphus and his descendants. The Exterminator had one son, born of the witch Thoarka; this heir also had an only son, the child of a sorceress. During four centuries this race has been the desolation of Iceland, always by a single trunk of the family tree existing and which never produces any branches. It is by these solitary heirs that the infernal spirit of Ingulphus has come down in all its entirety to the famous Han of Iceland, who has just now been happy enough to occupy your maiden thoughts."

The officer paused for a moment. Ethel was silent, from embarrassment, Schumacker from weariness. Delighted to find them disposed to listen, if not to talk, he continued:

"The brigand of Klipstadur has but one passion—hatred of mankind; no desire but to injure them—"

"He is wise," interrupted the old man, harshly.

"He lives always alone."

"He is happy," said Schumacker.

The young lieutenant was glad of this double interruption, which gave him a link for further conversation.

"May the god Mithra preserve us," cried he, "from being such wise and happy men."

Accursed be the ill-omened wind that brought the last of the demons of Iceland to Norway. I ought not to say ill-omened, for they say it is owing to a bishop that we have the felicity of possessing Han of Klipstadur. According to tradition, some Iceland peasants found Han, then a child, wandering in the mountains of Bessesledt. They were about to kill him, as Astyager killed the lion cub of Bactriana, but the good bishop interceded on his behalf, and took the cub under his protection, hoping to make a Christian of the devil. The good bishop made every effort to develop his diabolical intellect, forgetting that the hemlock in the hot-house of Babylon never changed into the lily. This imp of darkness repaid all his care by taking flight one fine night across the sea, in the trunk of a tree, previously setting fire to the episcopal manor to lighten up the way. According to the old women's tales, this is the way the Icелander reached Norway, and he offers the most complete type of a monster, with all the benefits of a good education. Since then the Faroë mines have fallen in, burying three hundred workmen beneath the ruins; the projecting rock Golyn fell on a village; the bridge at Half-Broën, the height of the cliffs, gave way with all its passengers; Drontheim cathedral has been burnt down; the beacons on the coast were extinguished

during a stormy night; lakes Sparbo and Smiasen could tell a tale of crimes and murder, besides those committed in the grottoes of Walderhog and Ryllass or in Dovre-Field ravines, proving only too well the presence of this incarnate Arimanes in the Drontheimhus. Old women relate, that with every crime a fresh hair shoots forth in his beard. It should now be bushy enough for the most venerable of Assyrian magicians. The fair lady doubtless knows that the governor has more than once endeavored to stop the extraordinary growth of this beard—”

Schumacker again broke silence.

“And all attempts to take this man have been in vain?” said he, with a look of triumph and an ironical smile. “I must congratulate the grand chancellor.”

The officer did not understand the ex-grand chancellor’s sarcasm.

“Han, up to this time, has remained as impregnable as Horatius, surnamed Cocles. Old soldiers, young militiamen, countrymen, mountaineers—all die or fly before him. He is a demon you can neither compass nor avoid; and the most fortunate thing for those in search of this man is not to find him.”

“Charming lady,” he continued, seating himself familiarly near Ethel, who drew closer to her father, “you are doubtless surprised at

the knowledge I possess concerning this supernatural being. I have a purpose in gathering together these singular traditions. I shall be delighted if my fair listener is of the same mind as myself—that Han's adventures would make a most thrilling romance, after the style of Mademoiselle de Scudéry's delightful works, such as *Artamenes* or *Clélie*, of which I have only read six volumes, none the less a chef-d'œuvre in my eyes. One must soften down our climate, embellish our traditions, and modify our barbarous names. Thus Drontheim would become *Durtinianum*; its forests would change, beneath my magic wand, into most delicious groves, watered by many a little rivulet, much more poetical than our ugly torrents. Our deep and gloomy caverns should be made into charming grottoes, lined with gilded rockwork and azure shells. One of these grottoes should be inhabited by the famous enchanter, Hannus of Thule, for you must allow that the name of Han of Iceland is not pleasing to the ear. This giant—it would be absurd for the hero of such a work to be anything but a giant—whose descent traces in direct line from the god Mars—Ingulphus the Exterminator presents nothing to the imagination—and the sorceress Theone—have I not well altered the name of

*Thoarka*?—daughter of the Sybil of Cuma. Hannus, after being brought up by the great magician of Thule, would escape from the pontiff's palace on a chariot drawn by two dragons. It would show but a poor imagination to keep up the paltry tradition—the trunk of a tree. Arrived at Durtinianum, charmed by its sunny clime, he makes it his place of residence, and the theatre of his crimes. It would be somewhat of a difficult task to draw a pleasing picture of Han's depredations. An imaginary love scene might soften down their many horrors. The shepherdess Alcippe, walking with her lamb through the myrtle and olive groves, should be perceived by the giant, who falls in love with her. Alcippe's heart is given to the handsome Lycidas, a militia officer quartered in the village. This giant is enraged at the soldier's good fortune, and the soldier resents the giant's attentions. You can imagine, fair lady, the charm that could be given to such adventures as those of Hannus. I will bet my pair of Cracovian boots against a pair of skates, that, with such a subject, Mademoiselle de Scudéry would write a romance that would thrill with ecstasy all the ladies of Copenhagen."

This word aroused Schumacker from his gloomy reverie, regardless of the lieutenant's ineffectual efforts to amuse him.

"Copenhagen?" said he; "is there any fresh news from there, lieutenant?"

"Nothing that I am aware of, unless it be the king's consent to this important marriage, which occupies the mind of all connected with both kingdoms."

"What do you mean?" returned Schumacker; "what marriage?"

The appearance of a fourth person arrested the lieutenant's reply.

All three raised their eyes. The prisoner's face brightened up, the lieutenant's changed from gay to grave, Ethel's sweet expressive countenance, looking pale and confused during the officer's lengthy soliloquy, was now suffused with life and happiness. She gave a deep sigh of relief, with a quick, sad smile at the new-comer—Ordener.

The old man, the young girl, and the officer were singularly placed with regard to Ordener—each one shared a secret in common with him which caused them mutual embarrassment. The return of Ordener to the donjon surprised neither Schumacker nor Ethel, for they expected him, but the lieutenant was as much astonished at seeing Ordener as the latter was at his presence. The new-comer would have doubted the officer's discretion regarding the scene on the previous evening had the laws of honor been less

strict on the subject. He was, nevertheless, surprised at seeing him quietly seated near the two prisoners.

These four persons could say nothing to each other on meeting, for the very reason that they had much to say to each other in secret. Thus amid glances of delight and embarrassment Ordener was received in silence.

The lieutenant burst into laughter.

“By the train of the royal robe, my dear new-comer, this silence much resembles that of the Senate of Gaul, when the Roman Brennus—I really forget, upon my honor, whether they were Roman or Gauls, senators or the generals. Never mind! As you are here, help me in giving this honorable old gentleman the news of the day. When you appeared on the scene I was about telling him of this illustrious marriage which now fills the minds of the Medes and Persians.”

“What marriage?” exclaimed both Ordener and Schumacker.

“By the cut of your clothes, sir stranger,” cried the lieutenant, clapping his hands, “I thought you came from some other world. This question changes a suspicion into a certainty. You landed yesterday, I suppose, on the banks of the Nidder, from a fairy chariot, drawn by two winged griffins. You



could not have traveled in Norway without hearing of the celebrated marriage about taking place between the viceroy's son and the grand chancellor's daughter."

Schumacker turned towards the lieutenant:

"What! Ordener Guldenlew going to marry Ulrica d'Ahlefeld?"

"As you have said," answered the lieutenant; "the wedding will take place here before French farthingales have gone out of fashion at Copenhagen."

"Frederick's son must be twenty-two, for I had been stationed a year in the fortress at Copenhagen when the news of his birth reached me. He marries young," continued Schumacker, with a bitter smile. "When the time of his disgrace arrives, they cannot accuse him of trying for a cardinal's hat."

The old favorite made an allusion to his own misfortunes that the lieutenant did not understand.

"No, indeed," said the officer, laughing. "Baron Ordener is to receive the title of count, the collar of the Order of the Elephant, and the rank of colonel, which would hardly go well with a cardinal's hat."

"So much the better," replied Schumacker, giving his head an ominous shake, as though he saw vengeance of his wrongs in the union: "some day they will turn his collar of nobility

into an iron one, they will shatter his count's coronet on his forehead, and strike him on the face with his colonel's epaulettes."

Orderer seized the old man's hand.

"Even in your hatred, my lord, lay not a curse on your enemy's happiness before you know whether he looks upon it as such."

"How now," said the lieutenant, "what can the Baron of Thorwick care for this old fellow's curses?"

"Lieutenant," exclaimed Orderer, "they carry more weight than you think,—perhaps,—and," continued he after a moment of silence, "your famous marriage, it is not so certain as you seem to believe."

"*Fiat quod vis*," replied the lieutenant, with a sarcastic bow; "the king, the viceroy, and the grand chancellor have certainly arranged this union; they wish it, and moreover command it shall be so. But as it does not meet with your approval, sir stranger, what matters about the grand chancellor, the viceroy, and the king?"

"You are perhaps right," said Orderer, gravely.

"On my honor," and the lieutenant laughed immoderately,—"this is too good a joke. I wish the Baron of Thorwick were present to hear one so well versed in the world's doings regulating his fate. My learned prophet,

believe me, you have not enough beard to be a good sorcerer."

"Sir lieutenant," replied Ordener, coldly, "I do not think that Ordener Guldenlew would marry any woman without loving her."

"Oh! oh! Listen to the book of maxims. And who tells you, Knight of the Green Mantle, that the baron does not love Ulrica d'Ahlefeld?"

"And, pray, who told you he does love her?"

Here the lieutenant, carried away by the heat of the argument as happened to him, asserted a fact of which he was by no means sure.

"Who says that he loves her? Your question is somewhat amusing. I am sorry for your powers of divination, but everybody knows this marriage is at least, as much one of inclination as much as of policy."

"Myself excepted," said Ordener, gravely.

"Yourself excepted. What can that matter? You cannot prevent the viceroy's son from being in love with the chancellor's daughter."

"In love?"

"Madly in love."

"He would indeed be mad to be in love with her."

"Hold! do not forget to whom, and of whom you are speaking. Do not tell us that

the viceroy's son could not be infatuated with a lady without consulting a boor like yourself."

While thus speaking, the lieutenant hastily rose. Ethel, who saw Ordener's eyes flash, rushed before him.

"Oh, pray calm yourself," said she; "take no heed of his insults. What can it matter to us if the viceroy's son love the chancellor's daughter?"

The touch of her gentle hand calmed the tempest in the young man's breast. He glanced at Ethel with a passionate longing, heedless of the lieutenant's words, who recovering his gayety, exclaimed:

"The lady would fill with infinite grace the part of one of the Sabine matrons, interposing between their fathers and their husbands. I have not measured my words," said he, addressing himself to Ordener; "I forgot the link that binds us, forbidding us to provoke each other. Chevalier, give me your hand; but you must allow that you also must have forgotten that you were speaking of the viceroy's son to his future brother-in-law, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld."

At this name Schumacker, who had been indifferent to all that was passing, leaped from the stone bench on which he was seated, with a terrible cry.

“D’Ahlefeld ! a d’Ahlefeld before me. Serpent, how was it that I did not trace the execrable father in the son ? Leave me at peace in my dungeon ; I was not condemned to have you before my eyes. There is nothing wanting now but to see Guldenlew’s son standing side by side with d’Ahlefeld’s son. Traitors ! cowards ! let them come to rejoice at my tears and my madness. Accursed race ! son of d’Ahlefeld ! leave me.”

The officer, for the moiment overwhelmed by this torrent of imprecations, soon recovered his powers of speech.

“Silence ! you old madman. Have you finished singing your fiendish litanies ?”

“Leave me, leave me, I say,” continued the old man ; “take my curse with you, and may it follow that miserable race of Guldenlew, which is soon to be allied to yours.”

“By Heaven !” cried the enraged officer ; “this is a double insult.”

Ordener interfered, as the lieutenant was beside himself.

“Respect old age, even in your enemy, lieutenant. We have a debt to settle ; I will take the prisoner’s insults upon myself, and give you satisfaction.”

“Very well, you must answer for a double share ; the combat shall be a mortal one, for I have to avenge my brother-in-law as well as

myself. When you take up my gauntlet, you also hold that of Ordener Guldenlew."

"Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld," replied Ordener, "you warmly defend the absent, a proof of your generosity. Will you not prove it by taking pity on this unfortunate old man, whose adversities give him some right to be unjust?"

D'Ahlefeld was one of those people whose best qualities are brought forward by praise. He shook Ordener by the hand, and approached Schumacker, who, exhausted by his temper, had sunk on the rock, supported by the arms of the weeping Ethel.

"Lord Schumacker," said the officer, "you have abused your old age, and I was taking advantage of my youth, if a champion had not interfered on your behalf. I came to pay my last visit to your prison. According to the viceroy's orders, the guard is to be withdrawn, and you are free to wander throughout the tower. I trust you will receive this good news graciously, although it comes from the lips of an enemy."

"Leave me," said the old captive, in a low voice.

The lieutenant bowed and obeyed, inwardly satisfied with himself by having gained Ordener's approving glance.

Schumacker remained some time with his arms folded, and his head bent down, buried

in his thoughts. Suddenly he raised his eyes and fixed them on Ordener, who stood silently before him.

"Well," said he.

"My lord, Captain Dispolsen has been murdered."

The old man's head fell forward.

"His murderer is the famous brigand, Han of Iceland."

"Han of Iceland!" exclaimed Schumacker.

"Han of Iceland!" repeated Ethel.

"It was he who also robbed the captain," pursued Ordener.

"Then," said the captive, "you have heard nothing about an iron casket, stamped with the Griffenfeld arms?"

"No, my lord."

Schumacker buried his head in his hands.

"I will restore them to you, my lord count, you may rely upon it. The murder was committed yesterday morning. Han has fled to the north, and I have a guide who knows his haunts. I am well acquainted with the Drontheimhus mountains. I shall find the brigand."

Ethel turned pale. Schumacker rose, a joyful look on his face, glad indeed to find that virtue was still to be met with.

"Noble Ordener," said he, "farewell."

And raising a hand towards heaven he left them, and was soon lost to view in the shrubberies.

Ordener quickly perceived Ethel seated on a rock overgrown with moss, looking as white as an alabaster statue mounted on a black pedestal.

"Great Heaven! my Ethel!" said he, rushing toward her, and clasping her in his arms, "what is the matter?"

"Oh!" answered the trembling girl, almost inaudibly, "if you have no love for me, at least have some pity. If your words yesterday were simply meant to deceive me, if it is not to cause my death that you have come to this prison, my Lord Ordener—in the name of Heaven and all the angels, renounce this mad design. Ordener! my well-beloved Ordener!" continued she, between her tears, and resting her head on the young man's shoulder, "make this sacrifice for me. Do not go in pursuit of this brigand, this fearful demon, to force him to mortal combat. For whom are you about to risk yourself? Whose interests can be dearer to you than those of her who but yesterday you called your much-loved wife?"

She ceased, choked by her sobs. Her arms were clasped round Ordener's neck, and her pleading eyes were fixed on his.



“My adored Ethel, you alarm yourself unnecessarily. Heaven will defend the right, and it is in your interest that I am about to take the risk. That iron casket contains—”

Ethel interrupted him.

“My interest! Have I any other interest than your life? If you die, Ordener, what is to become of me?”

“Why imagine I shall die, Ethel?”

“Ah! but you do not know what this fiendish brigand Han is. Do you realize the kind of monster you are about to pursue? Have you not heard that he is in league with the powers of darkness? that he can hurl mountains on villages? that his footsteps cause subterranean caverns to fall in? that his breath extinguishes the beacons on the rocks? And do you believe, Ordener, that you are a match for this giant, who has the devil to help him?—you, with your white hands, and your slender sword?”

“And your prayers, Ethel; and, strengthened by the feeling that I am fighting for your sake, will help me conquer. Be reassured, my Ethel, this brigand’s strength and influence have been greatly exaggerated. He is a man like ourselves—who gives death until he receives it.”

“You will not then listen to me? Mine are but idle words. What is to become of me

if you leave me to run from one danger to another, exposing, for I know not what interest, your life, which belongs to me, and placing yourself within reach of this monster?"

Here Ethel pictured to herself anew the horrors of the lieutenant's recital, now heightened by love and fear. She continued, in a voice broken by her sobs :

"I assure you, my dear love, you have been deceived as to the nature of this monster by those who say he is but a man. Believe what I tell you, Ordener, before any words of theirs. A thousand efforts have been made to overcome him, and he has destroyed entire regiments. I wish you could hear the same from others ; you might then be induced to abandon this idea."

Poor Ethel would have succeeded in her prayers had Ordener been less advanced in this adventure, strengthened by Schumacker's despairing words which came to his memory and strengthened his resolution.

"I could tell you, my dear Ethel, that I would not go, and none the less carry out my project ; but I will not deceive you, even to quiet your fears. I ought not to hesitate between your tears and your interests. Your fortune, your happiness, even your life perhaps is in jeopardy, your life ! my Ethel !"

And he pressed her tenderly in his arms.

"What is all that to me?" replied she, despairingly. "My Ordener, are you not my life? Pray do not bring certain and fearful misfortune upon me, to ward off slight and even doubtful ones. What matters my fortune, my life?"

"Ethel, the life of your father is also at stake."

She tore herself from his arms.

"My father's life!" she murmured, as pale as death.

"Yes, Ethel. This brigand, doubtless urged on by Count Griffenfeld's enemies, has obtained possession of certain papers, the loss of which may compromise your father, and lead to his destruction. I must have these documents, and with them his life."

Ethel remained silent for a few moments; her face was pale, her tears had dried up, and her bosom heaved painfully. Her eyes had the same look of apathy a criminal evinces when the axe is ready to fall on his head.

"Of my father," she murmured.

Then she turned her eyes slowly toward Ordener.

"Your work is useless, but continue with it."

Ordener drew her to him.

“Oh, noble-hearted girl, let your heart beat against mine. Generous friend, I will soon return. You shall be mine. I wish to save your father, and thus prove myself worthy to be his son. My Ethel, my well-beloved Ethel!”

How depict the feelings of one generous heart when brought in contact with another. If love unites the souls in life-long bonds, who can paint their inexpressible delight? They experience in one short moment all the happiness and glory of existence, embellished by the charm of a generous sacrifice.

“Oh, my Ordener, go; and if you never return, grief without hope kills, I shall have that melancholy consolation.”

They both rose, and Ordener drawing Ethel's arm within his own, clasped her hand, and led her through the winding paths of the garden until they lothfully reached the outer gate. The girl then cut off a tress of her beautiful black hair with a pair of golden scissors.

“Take it, Ordener; this will ever be with you, happier than I.”

Ordener pressed his lips upon his loved one's gift.

She continued:

“Think of me, Ordener. I will pray for you. My prayers may perhaps have as great

weight with the Almighty as your weapons against the demon."

Orderer bent before this angel. His heart was too full for utterance. For a few moments they remained clasped in each other's arms. When parting, perhaps forever, Orderer had the melancholy satisfaction of holding Ethel once more in his arms. He fondly pressed a kiss on the young girl's pale brow, and rushed under the vault of the spiral staircase, which echoed the sound of her last word to him, at once so sad and so sweet: "Farewell!"

## X.

You would not believe her unhappy, for everything about her speaks of happiness. She wears golden necklaces and purple robes. When she walks abroad, crowds of vassals prostrate themselves in her path, and kneeling pages spread carpets before her. But none see her in her favorite retreat; for there she may weep and her husband cannot hear her—I am this wretched being, the wife of an honored man, of a noble count, the mother of a child whose smiles stab me.

MATURIN—*Bertram.*

The Countess d'Ahlefeld's ever restless spirit passed a sleepless night. She was reclining on a couch buried in thoughts of the past, wherein crime had brought no real happiness, and sorrow had found no consolation. She was thinking of Musdœmon, whom her guilty illusion had formerly pictured so alluring. Now that she could read into his very soul, he was hateful to her. She, wretched woman, wept, not because she had been deceived, but from her inability to do so any longer. With her regret had no repentance, therefore tears were no relief. At this moment the door was thrown open, much to

her surprise, for she had forbidden any intrusion. She hastily dried the tears from her eyes, and looked up angrily at Musdœmon, whose reappearance gave her a shock, which was only modified by seeing that he was accompanied by her son Frederick.

"Mother," exclaimed the lieutenant, "how is it that you are here? I thought you were at Berghen. Has it become the custom for high-born ladies to fly about the country?"

The countess embraced her son warmly, but, like spoilt children, he responded coldly to her endearments. This was perhaps the unfortunate woman's worst punishment.

Frederick was her well-beloved son, the only being in the world for which she retained a pure affection; for often, in a degraded woman, even when the wife has disappeared, there still remains something of the mother.

"I see, my son, that on hearing of my presence at Drontheim you hastened at once to come to me."

"Oh, dear, no. I was bored at being in the fort; I went to town, and there I met Musdœmon, who brought me here."

The poor mother sighed deeply.

"For all that, mother, I am pleased to see you. You can tell me if knots of rose-colored ribbon resting on the knees are still worn at Copenhagen. Have you brought me a bottle

of that oil of Jouvence for whitening the skin ? I hope you have not forgotten the last romance which has been translated, nor the pale gold braid, which I asked of you, for my dark-colored doublet, nor the small combs which are now used under the curls to keep up the ringlets, nor . . .”

The unhappy woman had brought nothing for her son, but the only love she had in the world.

“My dear son, I have been ill ; my sufferings made me forgetful of your pleasures.”

“You have been ill, mother ? Well, but you are better. By the way, how is my pack of Normandy hounds ? I would wager that they have neglected to bathe my she-monkey in rose-water every night. I expect I shall find my Bilboa parrot dead on my return. When I am absent, no one thinks of my animals.”

“Your mother always thinks of you, my son,” said the countess, in broken accents.

Even at the hour when the destroying angel comes for his own, to cast the sinner into eternal torment, he would pity such agony as the unfortunate countess felt now.

Musdoemon turned aside to laugh.

“My Lord Frederick,” said he, “I can see that you do not intend the bright sabre to rust in its iron scabbard. You take care not



to omit, in the towers of Munckholm, the traditions of the salons of Copenhagen. Pray tell me, what need for the oil of Jouvence, the rose-colored ribbon, the little combs, if the only feminine fortress in Munckholm Tower is impregnable?"

"On my honor it is so," replied Frederick, laughing. "If I have failed, General Schack himself would have done the same. How can you surprise a fort which is always guarded? What can be done against chemisettes which show only the neck, against sleeves which entirely cover the arm? In fact there is nothing but the face and hands to prove that the young woman is not as black as the Emperor of Mauritania. Why, my dear tutor, in this case you would be nothing but a student. Believe me, the fort is impregnable when modesty holds the garrison."

"You are right," said Musdoemon; "but would not modesty be forced to surrender if, instead of the blockade of delicate attentions one should assault by love?"

"Lost time, my friend. Love has found a place there, but only helps to reinforce modesty."

"Indeed, my Lord Frederick, this is something new. With love on your side—"

"And who told you, Musdoemon, that he was for me?"

“And for whom then?” exclaimed Musdœmon and the countess—the latter had remained silent until the lieutenant’s words recalled Ordener to her thoughts.

Frederick was about to give them a piquant account of the scene on the previous night, when the silence prescribed by the laws of honor came to his mind; his merriment suddenly turned to embarrassment.

“By my faith,” said he, “I do not know. Perhaps some boor—some vassal—”

“Some soldier of the garrison,” said Musdœmon, with a burst of laughter.

“What, my son!” exclaimed the countess; “are you sure that she loves a peasant—a vassal? How fortunate if you were right.”

“No doubt about it; I am sure of it. And it is not a soldier of the garrison,” added the lieutenant, in a tone of pique. “But I am sure enough on this point, to ask you, mother, to cut short my utterly useless exile in that cursed chateau.”

The countess’ face had brightened on hearing this scandal, so compromising to the young girl. Ordener Guldenlew’s speedy departure for Munckholm now wore another aspect—she attributed it to the attraction of her son.

“Frederick, you shall presently give us a description of Ethel Schumacker’s love-passages. I am not in the least astonished. The

daughter of a rustic can fancy but a rustic. Do not curse the castle which procured you the honor of a visit from a certain person, who took the first step toward making your acquaintance."

"What do you mean, mother?" asked the lieutenant, opening his eyes; "what person?"

"A truce to your nonsense. Did not some one visit you yesterday? You see I know all."

"My faith, better than I do, mother. May the devil take me if I saw any other faces yesterday than those of the gargoyles at the corners of the old towers."

"What, Frederick, you saw no one?"

"Not a creature, mother, on my honor."

Frederick, in omitting his opponent of the donjon, only acted in strict accordance with the law of silence; besides, he did not count this rustic as anybody.

"But," said the mother, "was not the viceroy's son at Munckholm yesterday?"

The lieutenant laughed.

"The viceroy's son? Truly, mother, you are dreaming, or you are joking!"

"Neither one nor the other. Who was on guard yesterday?"

"Myself, mother."

"And you never saw the Baron Ordener?"

"No," said the lieutenant.

"But think, my son, he could have come incognito,—you have never seen him; as you were brought up at Copenhagen, while he was educated at Drontheim; remember, they say he has all sorts of caprices and curious ideas. Are you quite sure you saw no one?"

Frederick hesitated for a moment.

"No," he said, "no one; and I will tell you nothing more."

"In that case," replied the countess, "the baron has not gone to Munckholm."

Musdœmon, as surprised as Frederick, now listened attentively. He interrupted the countess.

"Permit me, noble lady," said he. "My Lord Frederick, what is, I pray you, the name of the vassal whom Schumacker's daughter loves?"

He repeated his question, for Frederick was buried in thought, and did not hear him.

"I do not know, or rather—yes, I do not know."

"Well, then, how do you know she loves a vassal at all?"

"Did I say he was a vassal? Yes, certainly, a vassal."

The lieutenant's embarrassment increased. This close questioning, the ideas it suggested,

the obligation of the imposed silence, all threw him into a trouble that he feared he could not master.

“My faith, sir, Musdœmon, and you, my noble mother, if questioning is the fashion nowadays, amuse yourselves by doing so to each other. As for myself, I have nothing more to tell you.”

And, opening the door hurriedly, he made his escape, leaving them in a flood of conjectures. He quickly made his exit into the court-yard, for he heard the voice of Musdœmon recalling him.

He mounted his horse, and went toward the harbor, intending to cross to Munckholm, hoping to meet the stranger, who had caused profound thought to enter for once into the giddiest brain to be found in one of the most frivolous of capitals.

“If it were Ordener Guldenlew,” said he, “then alas for poor Ulrica. But no; it is impossible that he could be idiotic enough to prefer the poverty-stricken daughter of a State prisoner to the daughter of a wealthy and all powerful minister. In any case, the daughter of Schumacker may be nothing more than a passing fancy, and there is nothing to prevent, when one has a wife, at the same time having a mistress; that is quite the thing. But no, it was not Ordener. The

viceroys son would not wear a shabby coat, an old black feather showing signs of all weathers, a cloak large enough to make a tent, his hair disheveled, without combs, his boots with iron spurs, and covered with mud and dust. Really it could not have been he, the Baron of Thorwick, a knight of the Order of Dannebrog; this stranger wore no decorations; if I had the Dannebrog collar it seems to me I should sleep in it. Besides, he never heard of the *Clélie*. Oh, no; that could not have been the viceroys son."

## XI.

If man could still retain the sprightliness of mind after experience has enlightened it, if he could inherit time without bending under its weight, he would never insult exalted virtue, whose first advice is always self-sacrifice.

MME. DE STAEL—*De l'Allemagne.*

“Well, what is it? You, Poël, what has brought you here?”

“Your excellency forgets that you have just ordered me to come.”

“Oh, yes,” said the general, “it was for that portfolio.”

Poël gave the governor the portfolio which he could easily have reached by simply extending his hand.

His excellency mechanically replaced the portfolio without opening it, and then he turned some papers abstractedly.

“Poël, I was going to ask you—— What time is it?”

The clock was just under his eyes.

“Ten o'clock in the morning, sir,” replied the valet.

“I was going to say, Poël—— What fresh news is there in the palace?”

The general continued his inspection of the papers, writing, with a preoccupied air, some words on each of them.

“Nothing, your excellency, except that we are expecting our noble master, about whom I see the general is uneasy.”

The general rose from his large desk and gave Poël an angry look.

“You have bad eyes. I anxious about Ordener! I know the reason of his absence; I am not expecting him yet.”

General Levin de Knud was so jealous of his own authority that he could not tolerate that a subordinate should divine his secret thoughts, or even imagine Ordener had acted without orders.

“Poël,” he added, “you can go.”

“By my faith,” exclaimed the governor, when he found himself alone, “Ordener misuses his authority. The constant bending of the blade ends by breaking it. Fancy making me pass such a sleepless night, exposing me, General Levin, to the questions of the chancellor’s wife and to a valet’s conjectures, and all this because he wanted to embrace an old enemy before doing so to an old friend. Ordener, Ordener, such caprices will put an end to your liberty. Let him come! let him



arrive now. I vow I will greet him as the powder does the spark. To dare to expose the Governor of Drontheim to a valet's conjectures—to the sarcasms of the chancellor's wife, indeed! Just let him present himself—”

The general continued to turn over his papers without reading them, so bad was his humor.

“General! my noble father!” exclaimed a well-known voice.

Ordener put his arms round the old man, who could not repress a cry of joy.

“Ordener, my brave boy. I am glad to see you.” Then, after a moment's reflection, he added:

“I am pleased to know, my lord baron, that you can so well master your feelings. You seem delighted to see me; you punished yourself, no doubt, by waiting during twenty-four hours you have been here.”

“My father, you have often impressed upon me that an unfortunate enemy should be considered before a prosperous friend. I come from Munckholm.”

“No doubt,” said the general; “when the enemy is in imminent danger. But Schumacker's future . . .”

“Is more threatening than ever. Noble general, a most odious conspiracy has been

planned against this unhappy man. Men who were born his friends now seek to destroy him. A man who was born his enemy will learn to save him."

The general, whose face had gradually softened down, interrupted Ordener :

"Good, my dear Ordener ; but how can it be possible ? Schumacker is under my safeguard. What men ? what plots ?"

Ordener would have been puzzled to answer this question. His information was uncertain, and his ideas very vague regarding the real position of the person for whom he was about to risk his life. Many would blame him for his folly ; but youth's impulse is to act for right and justice, and not to calculate the chances. Besides, in this world, where prudence yields but barren fruits, and wisdom is another word for irony, who can imply that generosity is mere folly ? Everything on this earth is relative, where all has its limits, and virtue itself would be a species of madness if behind there was not a God. Ordener was at an age when youth believes and is believed. Purely from this feeling he risked his life. The general, actuated by the same ideas, accepted these reasons, which would scarcely have held good in open discussion.

"What plots ? what men ?" my good father. In a few days I shall have brought

all to light ; then I will give you every information I have gained. I must leave to-night."

"What !" exclaimed the old man ; "can you not spare me a few hours ? But where are you going, and why must you go, my dear son ?"

"You have sometimes allowed me, my noble father, to perform a praiseworthy action in secret."

"Yes, my brave Ordener ; but you are not at all sure of your errand ; and you know the important matter which demands your presence here."

"My father has given me a month for reflection, and I shall devote that time to another's interest. Good actions engender good resolutions ; on my return you will see."

"Do you mean," replied the general, anxiously, "this marriage is displeasing to you ? Report says Ulrica d'Ahlefeld is beautiful. Tell me, have you seen her ?"

"I believe so," said Ordener. "It seems she is beautiful indeed."

"Well, then ?" asked the governor.

"Well," said Ordener, "she will never be my wife."

The cold and decisive tone in which this was said gave the general a perfect shock. The haughty countess' suspicions recurred to his mind.

"Ordener," said he, shaking his head, "I ought to know, for I have been a sinner myself. Well, I am an old fool! Ordener! the prisoner has a daughter . . ."

"Yes," exclaimed the young man; "general, I wish to speak to you about her. I entreat, my father, your protection for this helpless and oppressed girl."

"Truly," said the governor gravely, "you appeal most earnestly."

Ordener recovered himself, in a measure.

"And why should it not be so, when an unfortunate prisoner's life is in jeopardy, and what is far more precious—her honor."

"Life! honor. But I am governor here, yet I know nothing of all these horrors. Explain yourself."

"My noble father, the lives of the prisoner and his daughter, defenseless as they both are, are threatened by an infamous plot."

"You are making a grave charge; what proof have you?"

"The eldest son of one of our most powerful families is now at Munckholm. His object is to seduce Countess Ethel; he told me so himself."

The general started back with dismay.

"My God! Poor young creature! Ordener! Ordener! Ethel and Schumacker are under my protection. Who is this wretch? to what family does he belong?"

“The family d’Ahlefeld.”

“D’Ahlefeld!” exclaimed the governor. “Yes, it is all clear enough; Lieutenant Frederick is now at Munckholm. And they wish, my noble Ordener, to ally you to such a race! I can quite conceive your repugnance, noble Ordener.”

The old man folded his arms and remained some moments in thought, then he went to Ordener and pressed him to his breast.

“Young man, you can leave without any fear for your *protégés*; I will protect them. Yes, go; it would be better in all respects to do so. That infernal Countess d’Ahlefeld is here; you are perhaps aware of it?”

“The noble Countess d’Ahlefeld,” said the usher, throwing open the door.

At the name Ordener mechanically withdrew to the end of the room. And the countess entering without perceiving him, exclaimed:

“My lord general, your pupil has played you a trick; he never went to Munckholm.”

“Indeed,” said the general.

“Yes; my son Frederick, who has just left the palace, was on guard yesterday, and saw no one.”

“Really, noble lady,” said the general.

“So,” continued the countess, smiling triumphantly, “general, do not expect your Ordener.”

The governor remained cold and impassive.

"I no longer expect him, my lady countess."

"General," said the countess, turning around, "I thought we were alone. Who is this?"

The countess turned her piercing glance on Ordener, who simply bowed.

"Really—I only saw him once—but—without this costume it would be . . . My lord general, this is the viceroy's son."

"He himself, noble lady," replied Ordener, bowing again.

The countess smiled.

"In that case, will you permit a lady who will soon be nearly related to you to ask where you were yesterday, my lord count?"

"Lord count! I have not had the misfortune of already losing my noble father, lady countess."

"That is certainly not what I meant. Better become count by taking a wife than by losing a father."

"One is quite as objectionable to me as the other, noble lady."

The countess, a little discomfited at this speech, passed it off with a laugh.

"What I heard, then, was correct: his manners are somewhat unpolished. But the company of ladies will soon alter them, when

Ulrica d'Ahlefeld places the chain of the Order of the Elephant round your neck."

"A real chain, indeed!" replied he.

"You see, General Levin," pursued the countess, with a forced smile, "that your untractable pupil will not accept the rank of colonel from a lady."

"You are right, countess," answered Ordener; "a man who carries a sword should not owe his epaulettes to a petticoat."

The lady's face was now completely clouded.

"Oh, oh! whence came, then, my lord baron? Is it true that his excellency never went to Munckholm yesterday?"

"Noble lady, I am not prepared to satisfy everyone's curiosity. General, we shall meet again."

Then, shaking the old man's hand and saluting the countess he withdrew, leaving the lady confused from want of knowledge, and the general indignant at all that he now knew.

## XII.

The fellow that sits next him now, parts bread with him, pledges the breath of him in a divided draught, is the readiest man to kill him.

*Timon of Athens*, Act I., Scene 2.

SHAKESPEARE.

If the reader will turn to the road from Drontheim to Skongen,—the narrow and rocky road which skirts the gulf of Drontheim to the hamlet of Vygla, he will not be long in discovering tracks of the two travelers who went out of the gate of Skongen at daybreak, and rapidly ascended the many hills on the winding road to Vygla.

Both were completely enveloped in cloaks. One was upright, and walked with a quick, firm step, his head proudly raised, and the end of a sabre was visible beyond his cloak. In spite of the darkness, the plume of his hat could be seen waving in the breeze. The other was taller than his companion, but slightly bent. The hump on his back was doubtless only a knapsack he carried beneath



a large black cloak, whose frayed edges denoted both long and loyal service. He carried no weapon but a long stick, which helped to steady his unequal and hurried steps.

If night prevented the reader from distinguishing the features of the two travelers, he will recognize them perhaps by the conversation of one of them, commenced after an hour's silent and, consequently, tiresome, tramp.

"Master, my young master, from here we can see the Tower of Vygla and Drontheim belfry. That black mass before us is the tower, the one behind is the cathedral, whose flying buttresses, darker than the night itself, show forth like the sides of a carcass of a mammoth."

"Is Vygla far from Skongen?" asked the other pilgrim.

"We have the Ordals to pass, my lord; we shall not reach Skongen till three o'clock in the morning."

"What hour is it striking now?"

"Good heavens! master; you make me tremble. It is the bell sounding from Drontheim. When the wind echoes the peal, it denotes a storm. Clouds follow a northwest breeze."

"The stars have certainly disappeared behind us."

"Pray let us hasten forward, or the storm will soon overtake us, and by this time they have perhaps discovered the mutilation of Gill's body, and my disappearance. Let us double our pace."

"Willingly, old man. Your burden seems heavy; let me carry it for you. I am younger and stronger than you are."

"No, indeed, noble master; the eagle should not carry the turtle's shell. I am too unworthy to burden you with my wallet."

"But, old man, it fatigues you. It seems weighty. What can it contain? A while ago you stumbled, and it rang like iron."

The old man started aside.

"It rang, master, oh, no, you are mistaken. It is filled with nothing but food and clothes. No, my lord, it does not tire me."

The young man's kind offer had evidently greatly disturbed his companion, who tried to hide his discomfiture.

"Very well," answered the young man without noticing it, "if you do not feel tired, keep it."

The old man, reassured, nevertheless, hastened to change the conversation.

"It is sad to pass the night as fugitives on a route which it would be delightful to explore by daylight. To the left, on the banks of the gulf, a quantity of Runic stones are to be

found, on which, so tradition says, curious characters have been traced by gods and giants. Behind the rocks to our right are the salt marshes of Sciold, which doubtless communicate with the sea by a subterraneous canal. The curious fish called the lombric is found in them, which your humble guide discovered, feeds on sand. In the tower of Vyglá, which we are approaching, that glorious martyr Saint Etheldera was burnt alive by the pagan king, Vermond, on wood from the real cross, brought to Copenhagen by Olaf III., and taken from him by the King of Norway. Since then every effort has been made to convert this accursed tower into a chapel, but every cross that has been placed there has been consumed by fire from heaven."

At that moment a deep flash lighted up the gulf, the hills, the rocks, and the tower, and disappeared before the travelers could see any of these objects. They halted immediately, and the lightning was followed by a heavy clap of thunder, echoing from cloud to cloud in the heavens, and rock to rock upon earth.

They looked up. All the stars had disappeared, dense clouds were rolling rapidly one over another, and the tempest seemed like an avalanche over their heads. The mighty wind which was forcing all these masses before it had not as yet disturbed the trees,

nor had a single drop of rain fallen upon them. From on high was heard the rumblings of the storm. These, with the rushing waters of the gulf, were the only sounds that could be heard in the gloom of the night, which was rendered more terrible by the darkness of the tempest.

This tumultuous silence was suddenly interrupted by a kind of roar, which made the elder traveler start with fright.

"All-merciful Heaven!" cried he, grasping the young man's arm. "That is the laugh of the storm-devil, or the voice of . . ."

Another flash of lightning, a fresh peal of thunder, cut short his words. The tempest burst forth with great violence, as though prompted by this signal. The travelers wrapped their cloaks around them, to protect themselves from the rain, which fell in torrents, and from the dust which was driven up in clouds by the wind from the still dry earth.

"Old man," said the young man, "that flash enables me to see that the tower of Vygla is to our right. Let us leave the road and seek shelter there."

"Shelter in the Accursed Tower!" cried the old man. "May Saint Hospice protect us. Only think, young master, that tower is deserted."

"So much the better, old man, we shall not have to wait at the door."

"Think of the abominations which have defiled it."

"Well, by sheltering us it will be purified. Come, old man, follow me. I declare, on a night like this, I would try the hospitality of a robber's den."

Then, notwithstanding the old man's remonstrances, he seized him by the arm, and made his way to the building, which the frequent flashes showed him was not far off. As they approached, they perceived a light in one of the loop-holes of the tower.

"You see," said the young man, "that this tower is not deserted. Now you are reassured, no doubt."

"God! good God! master; where are you leading me? May Saint Hospice defend me from entering this devil's chapel!"

They had reached the foot of the tower. The young man knocked boldly at the door newly made in this formidable ruin.

"Calm your fears, old man. Some pious hermit has sanctified this dwelling by taking up his residence here."

"No," answered his companion, "I will not enter. I can answer for it that no hermit could live here unless he wore Beelzebub's seven chains as a rosary."

Meanwhile a light was seen moving from loop-hole to loop-hole, until it shone through the keyhole of the door.

"You are late, Nychol," cried a shrill voice. "The gallows is erected at noon, and it only takes six hours to come from Skongen to Vygla. Has your work increased?"

This question was put as the door was opened. The woman who opened it, perceiving two strangers instead of the person expected, gave a cry of terror and resentment, and drew back a step.

The woman's appearance was not very reassuring. She was tall, and the light of the lamp she carried threw a glare upon her livid features. Her face was something cadaverous, while from the hollows of her eyes darted sinister rays of light, like a funeral torch. Her scarlet petticoat, dyed a deeper red in patches, showed her bare feet below. Her withered form was partially covered by a man's vest, the sleeves of which were cut off at the elbow. The wind coming through the open door blew her long gray hair wildly about, notwithstanding the string slightly confining it, giving a fiercer look to the otherwise savage expression of her countenance.

"Good woman," said the younger of the new arrivals, "it rains in torrents; you have shelter and we have gold."

His old companion pulled his cloak, and whispered :

“ Oh, master ! what are you saying ? If this is not the devil’s home, it is some bandit’s retreat. Our gold, instead of being the means of our protection, will cause our destruction.”

“ Peace,” said the other, drawing a purse from his pocket ; and showing its shining contents to his hostess, he repeated his request.

The latter recovered from her surprise, was scrutinizing the travelers with her haggard-looking eyes.

“ Strangers,” she at length exclaimed, paying no heed to the words, “ your guardian angels must have forsaken you. What can you seek among the inhabitants of the Accursed Tower ? Strangers, no man told you to seek shelter in these ruins, for one and all would have said, ‘ Better far the lightning and tempest than a refuge in the tower of Vygla.’ The only human being who enters has the entrance to no man’s house ; he quits his solitude only for a crowd, and lives but for death. Among mankind his name is never mentioned without a curse ; he carries out their vengeance, and exists by their crimes. The vilest wretch at the hour of his doom pours the universal contempt upon him, to which he considers himself entitled to add his own. Stranger !—you must be, for you do not shrink

with horror from the very threshold of this tower,—do not trouble the wolf and his cubs. Retrace your steps; and if you would not be shunned by your fellow-men, never say that the light has shone on your faces from the lamp belonging to the inhabitants of the tower of Vyglá.”

At these words, pointing to the door, she advanced toward the travelers. The old man trembled in every limb, and gave his young companion a supplicating look. The latter, who had little understood her words, owing to the tall woman’s extreme volubility, thought she was mad; besides, he did not feel inclined to continue his journey in the rain, which still came down in torrents.

“Faith, our good hostess, that must be a strange person you spoke of, and I should be sorry to lose the opportunity of making his acquaintance.”

“His acquaintance is soon made, young man, and sooner ended. If the evil spirits prompt you, go murder a man or mutilate a corpse.”

“Mutilate a corpse,” repeated the old man, in a quivering voice, and hiding himself in the shadows of his companion.

“I do not understand you,” said the latter; “your ways, to say the least of it, are somewhat vague, and the most simple thing is to



remain here. A man must be mad to continue his journey in such weather."

"But far more so," muttered the old man, "to seek shelter from bad weather in a bad place."

"Unhappy man," cried the woman, "do not rap at the house of him who does not know how to open any other door than that of the sepulchre."

"Should it be my sepulchre, no one shall say that I drew back for a few threatening words. My sword shall be my safeguard. Come now, close the door, for the wind blows cold, and take this gold."

"Pray what should I do with your gold?" replied the hostess. "Precious in your hands, it would be but vile dross in mine. Very well, remain then for the sake of the gold. It can help to shelter you from the storm, but it cannot shield you from the contempt with which men will afterwards regard you. Remain. You give a higher price for hospitality than is paid for a murder. Wait for me here, and hand me your gold. This is the first time a man has entered here with his hands filled with gold unstained with blood."

Then, placing her lamp aside, she bolted the door and disappeared under an arch made beneath a staircase at the end of the hall.

While the old man trembled and invoked by every title the glorious Saint Hospice, roundly cursing under his breath his young companion's imprudence, the latter took the light and examined the circular chamber in which they found themselves. He could not help shuddering at the object fixed to the wall, and the old man, whose eyes watched every movement, exclaimed :

"Great Heaven ! master, a gallows."

It was in fact a large gibbet, which reached the centre of the damp and lofty porch.

"Yes," said the young traveler ; "and here are wooden and steel saws, chains, iron collars, a set of triangles, with heavy iron pincers hung over it."

"Holy Saints of Paradise !" exclaimed the old man, "where are we?"

His companion coolly continued his examination.

"Here is a roll of hempen cord, there furnaces and boilers ; this portion of the wall is covered with tongs and skinning knives, here are leather lashes tipped with steel, an axe, a mace."

"Have we then come to hell's depository?" cried the old man, terrified at this fearful enumeration.

"There," continued the other, "are copper syphons, wheels with brass teeth, a chest of

long nails, a screw-jack. It is indeed horrible furniture. Old man, I regret that my imprudence should have brought you here."

"Really, it is quite time you did."

The old man was more dead than alive.

"Do not be afraid ; the place matters but little. I am here to protect you."

"A fine protection !" muttered the old guide, whose terror had weakened his respect and fear for his young companion ; "a sabre of thirty inches against a thirty-cubit gibbet."

The tall woman reappeared, and taking up the lamp, made a sign to the travelers to follow her. They cautiously ascended a narrow and broken staircase, made out of the thickness of the wall. Through each loop-hole the wind and rain came with a rush, threatening to extinguish the quivering flame of the lamp which the hostess tried to shield with her long and transparent hands. It was not without repeatedly tripping over loose stones, which the old man imagined were human bones scattered about, that they reached the first floor of the tower, a circular room, similar to the one beneath it. In the centre, according to the usual custom, burnt a large fire, the smoke from which spread its fumes around, escaping by a hole made in the ceiling. The flames and the lamp attracted the travelers toward the spot. Some fresh meat was twisting

on a spit before the fire. The old man turned away in horror.

"It was in that execrable grate," said he to his companion, "that the limbs of a saint were burnt on the wood of the blessed cross."

A clumsy table stood a short distance from the fire. The hostess invited the travelers to be seated.

"Strangers," said she, placing the lamp down, "supper will shortly be ready, and my husband will doubtless soon be here, fearing lest the spirit of midnight should carry him off in passing near the Accursed Tower."

Then Ordener—for the reader has guessed that it was he and his guide, Benignus Spiagudry—was able to scrutinize his companion's strange disguise, a task which had taxed all the latter's ingenuity, in order to avoid recognition and capture. The poor fugitive had changed his suit of reindeer skin for a complete one of black cloth, a relic of the Spladgest, which had formerly belonged to a celebrated Drontheim grammarian who in despair had drowned himself, because he was unable to discover why *Jupiter* gave *Jovis* in the genitive case. His hazelwood clogs had been replaced by a pair of postilion's jack-boots, who had been crushed to death by falling

under his horse. The old guardian's spindle-shanks would have been lost in these boots; but for the addition of many a wisp of hay, he could never have walked in them. The large wig, formerly belonging to a young French dandy, who had been assassinated by thieves at the gates of Drontheim, hid his baldness, and fell around his deformed shoulders. He had a patch on one eye, and, thanks to some rouge which he had found in an old maid's pocket, who had died for love, his pale and hollow cheeks were of an unusual color. The charm was increased by the rain spreading the rosy hue the whole length of his face. Before taking his seat, he carefully placed under him the package he had carried on his back, and wrapped himself in his old cloak; and while his companion's attention was riveted upon him, he appeared to be engrossed by the roast meat his hostess was attending to, and toward which he from time to time cast looks of anxiety and horror, muttering: "Human flesh—*horrendas epulas!* Cannibals! Moloch's supper. *Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet.* . . . Where are we? Atreus—Druidess—Irmensul. The devil destroyed Lycaon."

At length he exclaimed:

"Good heavens! thanks be to Providence, I can see a tail."

Ordener, who had listened attentively, followed the train of his thoughts, and the idea made him smile.

"That tail is not very reassuring. It may belong to the devil."

Spiagudry paid no heed to his joke; his eyes were fixed upon the other end of the room. He trembled, and whispered in Ordener's ear:

"Master, look, on that heap of straw, in the shadow . . ."

"Well?" said Ordener.

"Three motionless and naked corpses—three children's bodies!"

"Some one is knocking at the door," said the woman, who was crouching over the fire.

In fact, loud and continued knocking could be heard even above the noise of the storm.

"It is he at last; it is Nychol."

And, taking up the lamp, the hostess went hurriedly down.

The two travelers heard a confused sound of voices, in the midst of which the following words, distinct above the rest, made Spiagudry start with affright.

"Woman, silence! we will remain. The storm comes in without asking your leave."

Spiagudry crept close to Ordener.

"Master, master!" said he feebly, "woe be to us."

The sound of feet was heard on the stairs, and two men dressed as monks came into the room, followed by the terrified hostess.

One was of medium height, and wore the black coat and the closely cut hair of a Lutheran minister; the other was short, and was dressed as a hermit, with a rope girdle round his waist, and the hood drawn over his eyes, and only allowed his long black beard to be seen. His hands were entirely concealed beneath his large sleeves.

At the appearance of these two quiet-looking persons, Spiagudry, who had been alarmed at the voice of one of them, felt now reassured.

"Fear not, dear lady," said the minister to the hostess. "Christian priests return good for evil. Would they therefore injure those who would serve them? We humbly ask for shelter. If the reverend doctor whom I met, like myself, far from home, spoke harshly just now, he was wrong; our vows enforce moderation of tone. Alas! the most devout are not infallible. I lost myself on my way from Skongen to Drontheim. I was without a guide, without shelter from the storm, when my reverend brother, who like myself had wandered far from home, allowed me to accompany him as far as here. He spoke in high terms of your kind hospitality,

dear lady, and he was no doubt right. Do not say, like the bad shepherd, '*Advena, cur intras!*' Receive us, worthy hostess, and God will save your crops from the storm; God will find a shelter for your cattle during the tempest, as you have done for the lost travelers."

"Old man," interrupted the woman, angrily, "I have neither cattle nor crops."

"Well, if you are poor, Heaven will bless you before the rich. You and your husband, with increase of years, will gain the respect of all, not for your wealth, but for your virtues; your children will grow up esteemed by every one, and follow in their father's footsteps . . ."

"Silence!" cried the hostess. "It is by keeping our present position that our children, like ourselves, will be treated with the contempt of the world, which follows our race from generation to generation. Silence, again I say. Your blessing would only turn into a curse upon our heads."

"Oh, Heaven!" replied the minister; "who, then, are you? What crimes darken your life?"

"What are crimes? what are virtues? We are privileged people here; we possess no virtues, we commit no crimes."

"The woman is mad," said the minister, turning toward the little hermit, who was drying his rough cloth dress before the fireplace.



"No, priest," answered the woman; "you shall know where you are. I prefer horror to any show of pity. I am not mad, but the wife of . . ."

The rest of the sentence was lost, owing to violent knocking at the door, to the great disappointment of Spiagudry and Ordener, who had both been attentive listeners.

"Cursed be the high sheriff of Skongen," said the woman in red, "for assigning such a dwelling to us as this tower by the wayside. Perhaps, again, this is not Nychol."

Nevertheless she took up the lamp.

"What matters, after all, if it is another guest? The brook can flow where the torrent has passed."

The four travelers now scrutinized each other. Spiagudry, who had been alarmed by the hermit's voice, and afterward reassured by seeing his black beard, would have trembled had he been aware of the piercing look the latter was casting at him beneath the folds of his hood.

In the general silence, the minister hazarded a question.

"Brother hermit, I presume you are a Catholic priest who escaped during the last persecution, and that you were homeward bound when I was fortunate enough to meet you. Can you inform me where we are?"

The door opened before the hermit could reply.

"Woman, let a storm come, and many there are who are only too glad to find a place at our despised table, and to take shelter under our accursed roof."

"Nychol," replied the woman, "I could not prevent . . ."

"What care I as to the number of guests, provided they pay? Gold is equally well earned either in lodging a traveler or in strangling a brigand."

The speaker was standing at the door in full view of the travelers. He was a man of colossal proportions, dressed in red serge, similar to that worn by the hostess. His enormous head, sunk between his shoulders, contrasted with the long and angular neck of his gracious spouse. He had a low forehead, a flat nose, thick eyebrows, dark lines underneath the eyes, which shone forth with a blood-red light. His face, being clean shaved, showed a wide-spread mouth, with black lips parted into a hideous smile. Two tufts of bushy hair grew at each side of his face, extending to the bottom of the jaw, giving it a square-like form. He wore a green felt hat, dripping with rain, which he had not even the courtesy to raise on seeing the travelers.

On perceiving him, Benignus Spiagudry uttered a terrified cry, while the Lutheran minister turned aside with surprise and horror, when the master of the house recognized him, thus addressing him :

“ What ! you here, your reverence ? I never expected to be amused to-day by your piteous and frightened countenance.”

The minister restrained his first movement of repugnance, his features became grave and serene.

“ And I, my son, am glad that chance has brought the shepherd to the stray sheep, who will now take heed of the pastor.”

“ Ah ! by Haman’s gibbet !” replied the other, with a burst of laughter, “ this is the first time I have heard myself compared to a sheep. Listen to me, father. If you would flatter the vulture, do not call him a pigeon.”

“ He who changes the vulture into the dove would console, my son, and not flatter you. You think I fear you, while I only pity you.”

“ You must, truly, your reverence, have a large amount of pity. I should have thought you would have exhausted it all on that poor devil to-day to whom you showed the cross that you might the better hide the sight of my gibbet.”

“ That unfortunate man was less to be pitied than you are ; for he wept, while you laughed.

Happy is the man who in his last moments remembers that the arm of man is less powerful than the word of God."

"Well said, father," replied the host, with horrible sardonic gayety. "Happy the man who weeps. Besides, our man to-day had committed no greater crime than that of loving the king so much that he could not live without putting his majesty's face on little copper medals, which he afterward gilded artistically, to render them more worthy of the royal effigy. Our gracious sovereign has not been ungrateful, and, in recompense to him for so much love, he bestowed a fine hempen cord upon him, which, for the enlightenment of my worthy guests, I myself conferred on him to-day in the public square of Skongen, as grand chancellor of the order of the Gibbet, assisted by you, grand chaplain of the same order . . ."

"Stop, unhappy man!" interrupted the minister. "Can he who punishes forget the penalty? Listen to the thunder . . ."

"Well, and what is thunder? A peal of satan's laughter."

"Good God! He has just sent a man to his death, and he can blaspheme."

"A truce to your sermons, old idiot!" cried the host, in an irritated voice. "Unless you curse the angel of darkness, who has

brought us together twice in twelve hours in the same cart and under the same roof—imitate the silence of your comrade, the hermit, who anxiously hopes to return to his grotto at Lynrass. I must thank you, brother hermit, for the blessing you bestow on the Accursed Tower from your position on the hill. I thought you were very tall, and that black beard to me seemed to be white. You are certainly the hermit of Lynrass, are you not, the only hermit in the whole of the Drontheimhus?"

"I am, indeed, the only one," was the reply, in muffled tones.

"We are, then," returned the host, "the two solitary beings of the province. Ho! Bechlie! hurry yourself with that quarter of lamb, for I am hungry. I was delayed in the village of Burlock by that cursed Doctor Manryll, who would only give me twelve ascalins for a body; that infernal guardian of the Spladgest at Drontheim gets forty. Hulloa! you, sir, of the wig; what is the matter with you? You nearly fell backwards? I say, Bechlie, have you finished the skeleton of Orgivius, the poisoner and famous magician? It is time it was sent to the museum at Berghen. Have you sent one of your brats to the syndic of Lœvig for what he owes me—four double crowns for having boiled a witch

and two alchemists to death, and for removing several chains from his bench; twenty ascalins for taking down Ismael Typhaine, the Jew, from the gibbet, on the complaint of the bishop; a crown for putting a new wooden arm to the stone gallows of the borough?"

"The money," replied the woman, in a shrill voice, "remained in the hands of the syndic because your son had forgotten to take a wooden spoon to receive it in; not one of the judge's servants would place it in his hand."

The husband frowned.

"Let their necks come within my grasp, and they shall see if I first wait for a wooden spoon to touch them. But we must keep in with the syndic; for it was to him that Ivar the robber sent in a petition, complaining that he was put to the torture, not by the usual official, but by myself; and, as he had not been convicted, he could not be considered infamous. By the way, wife, stop your children from playing with my nippers and pincers. Where are they, the little monsters?" continued the host, approaching the straw on which Spiagudry thought he saw three dead bodies. "Here they are; they sleep, notwithstanding all this noise, just like three hanged bodies."

From the horrible words just uttered with cool and insolent gayety, the reader can doubtless divine who inhabits the tower of Vyglá. Spiagudry, who recognized the new-comer from the first, having seen him so often figure in the fearful ceremonies in the square of Drontheim, now was half dead with fright, as he had personal motives for dreading this terrible person. He said to Ordener, in a scarcely articulate tone :

“This is Nychol Orugix, the headsman of the Drontheimhus.”

Ordener, at first struck with horror, trembled and regretted the highway, with all its storm. He soon recovered himself, and his curiosity was aroused. Although he pitied his old guide's terror and embarrassment, he gave his whole attention to the words and ways of the singular being who had last entered, as we should listen to the hyena howling and the lion's roar, when brought from the desert into our cities. Poor Benignus was far too confused to make any psychological observations, and more intent on hiding himself behind Ordener, and drawing his cloak and wig well over him, and only breathed in gasps.

The hostess had served up the roast quarter of lamb, deprived of its reassuring tail, on a large earthenware dish. The executioner

seated himself between the two priests, facing Ordener and Spiagudry, while his wife, after placing a jug of beer sweetened with honey, a piece of *rindebrod*<sup>4</sup> and five wooden platters, on the table, took a chair before the fire, and occupied herself in clearing off the notches from her husband's pincers.

"There, your reverence," said Orugix, laughing, "the sheep offers you some lamb. And you, Sir Knight of the Wig, was it the wind spread your hair so over your face?"

"The wind, sir,—the storm," whimpered the trembling Spiagudry.

"Come, pluck up courage, old one. You see the holy priests and I are good friends. Tell us who you and your taciturn young friend are. Talk a bit. Let us make acquaintance; for if your speech is anything like your appearance, it will be comical enough."

"You are jocular, master," said the guardian, contracting his lips, grinning, and winking his eye, with an attempt at mirth. "I am nothing but a poor old . . ."

"Yes," interrupted the jovial headsman, "some old wiseacre, some old wizard . . ."

"Oh, master, a scholar, yes, a sorcerer, no."

"So much the worse. A sorcerer would complete our merry sanhedrim. My noble



guests, let us drink. This old scholar may then find words to enliven our supper. To the health of the man hung to-day, brother preacher. Well, father hermit, so you refuse my beer?"

The hermit had drawn from beneath his frock a large gourd full of clear water, with which he filled his glass.

"Well, forsooth, hermit of Lynrass," exclaimed the headsman, "if you will not taste my beer, I should like some of that water you seem to prefer."

"So be it," replied the hermit.

"Take off your glove, reverend brother; you must pour the drink out with a bare hand."

The hermit made a sign of refusal.

"I am bound by a vow," said he.

"Pour away, then," cried the executioner.

Orugix had scarcely touched the glass with his lips when he quickly put it down. The hermit had emptied his at one draught.

"By the chalice of Jesus, reverend hermit, what is this infernal liquor? I never tasted any like it since the day I was nearly drowned in crossing from Copenhagen to Drontheim. Truly, hermit, this is no water from Lynrass, it is sea-water."

"Sea-water!" repeated Spiagudry, terrified no less at this than at sight of the hermit's gloves.

"What now?" cried the hangman, laughing; "everything seems to alarm you, old Absalom, even to the drink which a holy monk takes to mortify the flesh."

"Alas! no, master! but sea-water—there is only one man . . ."

"Come, doctor, you do not know what you are saying. Your uneasiness among us either springs from a guilty conscience or contempt."

These words were pronounced in such a tone that Spiagudry felt the necessity of dissimulating his terror, and using all the presence of mind he possessed by having recourse to the vast stores of his memory.

"Contempt! I, contempt for you, my noble master! for you, whose presence in a province gives it the right of *merum imperium*,<sup>5</sup> or right of blood! for you, the master of high justice, the executioner of the public prosecutor, weapon of justice, shield of innocence! you, whom Aristotle, Book Six, last chapter on '*Politics*,' classed among the magistrates, and whom Paris of Puteo, in his treatise '*de Syndico*,' fixes the emoluments at five golden crowns, as this passage proves *quinque aureos manivollo*! for you, whose brother headsman at Cronstadt acquires a patent of nobility, after serving three hundred heads! for you, whose terrible but honorable functions are proudly filled by the youngest married man in

Franconia, by the most junior counsel at Rentlinger, by the last citizen installed at Stedien. Do I not also know, my good master, that your brotherhood in France have the right of *havadium* on each patient of Saint Ladre, on the pigs and cakes on the eve of the Epiphany? How could I have no respect for you, when the Abbot of Saint-Germain-des-Prés gives you each year, at the feast of Saint Vincent, 'a pig's head, and places you in front of the procession . . ."

Here the crude guardian was roughly interrupted by the headsman.

"This is the first time I have heard of it. The learned abbot you mentioned has up to the present defrauded me of all those fine privileges you have just pictured in so enticing a manner. Sir strangers," continued Orugix, "apart from this old idiot's extravagant nonsense, it is true that I have missed my career. I am but the poor executioner of a paltry province. Why, I ought to be in a better position than Stillison Deckoy, the famous headsman of Moscovy. Would you believe that I am the same man who twenty-four years ago was appointed to behead Schumacker?"

"Schumacker, the Count of Griffenfeld!" exclaimed Ordener.

"That astonishes you, Sir Mute. Yes, the same Schumacker, whom chance may replace

in my hands, should the king revoke his reprieve.—Let us empty the pitcher, gentlemen, and I will relate to you how it is that with such a brilliant opening I have sunk to such a miserable position.

“I was, in 1676, assistant to Rhum Stuald, the royal headsman of Copenhagen, at the time of Count Griffenfeld’s condemnation. My master was taken ill, and I was, thanks to the interest I possessed, chosen to replace him for this famous execution. The fifth of June—I shall never forget the day—at five in the morning I began to work. With the help of the carpenter of scaffolds, we erected an immense one in the Citadel Square, and draped it with black, out of respect for the rank of the condemned man. At eight the Garde-noble surrounded the scaffold; the Sleswig Uhlans kept back the crowd. Who in my place would not have been intoxicated with his position? All eyes were fixed upon me as I stood on the platform, my axe in hand, for at that moment I was the most important person in the two kingdoms. My fortune was made; for these great lords who compassed the chancellor’s destruction, what could they do without me? I could see myself appointed royal executioner to the capital, with assistants, and many other privileges. Listen. The clock struck ten. The condemned man

left his prison, crossed the square, and calmly mounted the scaffold with a firm step. I wished to bind his hair, but he performed this last service for himself. 'For a long time,' said he, with a smile, to the prior of Saint Andrew, 'I have been my own valet.' I was about to use the black bandage for his eyes, but he disdainfully declined it, evincing, however, no contempt toward myself. 'My friend,' said he, 'this is perhaps the first time that only a few feet separate the two extreme officers of the secular arm—the chancellor and the headsman.' Those words have been engraven on my memory. He also refused the black cushion I offered him for his knees, embraced the chaplain, and, declaring his innocence, knelt down. With one blow I shattered the shield of his armorial bearings, exclaiming, according to custom, 'This is not done without good reason.' This insult shook the count's firmness: he turned pale, but he hastened to say, 'The king gave; the king can take away.' He placed his head upon the block, and turned his eyes to the east. I raised my axe with both hands. Listen. Suddenly there came a cry: 'Pardon in the name of the king! pardon for Schumacker!' I turned round, and saw an aide-de-camp galloping toward the scaffold, waving a parchment. The count rose—not joyously, but with an air

of contentment. The parchment was handed to him. 'Just Heaven!' cried he, 'imprisonment for life. Their mercy is harder to bear than death.' He came down, crestfallen like a thief, from the scaffold he had mounted so firmly. For myself it was another matter—the safety of this man was my fall. After taking down the scaffold, I returned to my master. I was still full of hope, although slightly disappointed at losing a golden crown, the fee for each head. This was not all. The following day I received my appointment as headsman of the Drontheimhus, executioner of the province the least important in Norway. It only shows, gentlemen, how little matters lead to great events. The count's enemies, wistful to have the credit for clemency, had so arranged for the reprieve to arrive immediately after the execution. The minute made all the difference, and I was blamed for my slowness, as if I could hurry the last moments of an illustrious person by preventing him from amusing himself. As if a royal executioner could behead a grand chancellor with as little ceremony as a provincial headsman would a Jew. There was ill-feeling in all this. I had a brother, and I believe he still exists, who by changing his name had succeeded in getting into service at the grand chancellor's, Count d'Ahlefeld. My presence at Copenhagen

annoyed this pitiful fellow. My brother despises me. I shall perhaps hang him some day."

The headsman paused, to give vent to his gayety; then he continued:

"You see, my dear guests, that I have taken my own course, and cast ambition to the winds. I honestly act up to my business. I sell bodies, or Bechlie makes skeletons of them, and they are purchased by the Museum of Anatomy, at Berghen. I laugh at everything, even at this poor female. She was a gipsy, but solitude has driven her mad. My three heirs grow up in fear of the devil or the gallows. My name is held in terror by the smallest children of the Drontheimhus. The syndics furnish me with a cart and my red clothes. The Accursed Tower keeps out the rain as well as any bishop's palace. Old priests, driven by the storm to my roof, preach to me, and scholars flatter me. In fact I am as happy as any other. I drink, I eat, I hang, I sleep."

The headsman had not reached the end of this long discourse without drinking much beer and loud explosions of laughter.

"He kills, and he sleeps," murmured the minister; "wretched man."

"How happy the wretch is!" exclaimed the hermit.

“Yes, brother hermit,” said the executioner; “a wretched man, like yourself, but certainly far more happy. My business would be good enough if they would not interfere with its privileges. Would you credit it? the newly appointed chaplain at Drontheim, under pretext of a certain illustrious marriage about to take place, has petitioned for the pardon of twelve criminals, who virtually belong to me.”

“Who belong to you?” exclaimed the minister.

“Yes, certainly, reverend sir. Seven of them were to be flogged, two branded on the left cheek, and three to be hung, which make twelve in all. Yes, twelve crowns and thirty ascalins; which I lose if pardon is granted. What do you think, strangers, of a chaplain who thus disposes of my emoluments? This cursed priest is called Athanasius Munder. Oh! if he were only within my grasp.”

The minister rose, and in a calm voice said:

“My son, I am Athanasius Munder.”

At these words Orugix started from his seat with rage; then the chaplain's kind and noble glance beamed upon him, and he sat down silent and confused.

Ordener, who had risen from the table, ready to defend the priest, was the first to break the silence.



"Nychol Orugix," said he, "here are thirteen crowns to compensate you for the pardon of these condemned men."

"Alas!" interrupted the minister, "who knows whether I shall obtain their pardon? If I could only see the viceroy's son; for it entirely depends upon his marriage with the chancellor's daughter."

"Reverend sir," replied the young man, in a firm voice, "you will obtain it, for Ordener Guldenlew will not accept the nuptial ring until your protégés' chains have been removed."

"Young stranger, you can do nothing, but God will reward you for these words."

However, Ordener's thirteen crowns and the minister's kindly glance, had quite restored Nychol's usual gayety.

"There, good chaplain, you are a brave man, worthy of serving in the chapel of Saint Hilarion. I said more against you than I really thought. You walk straight in your own path, and it is no fault of yours if it crosses mine. The man I want to grasp is the guardian of the dead at Drontheim, that old magician—the keeper of the Spladgest. What is his name? Spliugry—Spadugry? Tell me, you old Doctor Babel of science, you who seem to know all, could you not help me to find this brother sorcerer? You must have

met him sometimes on festival days prancing in the air astride on a broomstick."

Certainly, if at this moment poor Benignus could have fled into the air on something of the kind, he would joyfully have confided his terror-stricken self to this mode of egress. He was terrified at all his surroundings—the memories of the Accursed Tower, the red woman's haggard face, the voice, the gloves and the mysterious hermit's drink, the adventurous spirit of his young companion, but, above all, the executioner, beneath whose roof he had sought shelter. He had lost all control, and could do nothing but tremble, when questioned by the formidable Orugix. As he was by no means anxious to imitate the priest's heroism, his embarrassed tongue refused to respond.

"Well," continued the hangman, "cannot you tell me his name? Does your wig deafen you?"

"A little, my lord." But he managed to add: "I swear I do not know his name."

"He does not know it," said the formidable voice of the hermit. "He is wrong to swear. That man's name is Benignus Spia-gudry."

"I!—I! great heavens!" cried the old man in terror.

The headsman burst into a laugh.

"Who said it was you? We are speaking of that pagan of a guardian. Why, this pedagogue alarms himself for nothing. If all his queer grimaces were made from some grave cause! The old idiot would be amusing to hang. And so, my venerable doctor," continued the executioner, delighted with Spiagudry's fright, "you do not know this Benignus Spiagudry?"

"No, master," said the guardian, reassured somewhat at the thought of his *incognito*; "I am not in the least acquainted with him. Since he has had the misfortune to displease you, I should be truly sorry ever to meet him."

"You seem to know him, friend hermit?"

"Yes, certainly," replied the monk. "He is tall, old, thin, bald . . ."

Spiagudry, now justly alarmed, hurriedly arranged his wig.

"He has," added the hermit, "hungry looking hands, like those of a thief who has not met with a traveler for a week. His back is bent."

Spiagudry did his best to straighten himself.

"Besides, he could well be mistaken for one of the bodies under his charge, if his eyes had not that piercing look."

Spiagudry lifted his hand to his protecting patch.

"Thanks, father," said the hangman. "I shall now be able to recognize the old Jew."

Spiagudry, who was a good Christian, revolting at this intolerable insult, could not repress an exclamation.

"Jew ! master !"

And then he stopped short, fearful of having said too much.

"Well, Jew or infidel, what matters, if he is in league with the devil, as report says?"

"I should readily believe it," answered the hermit, with a diabolical smile, which his hood could not entirely conceal, "if he were not such a coward. How could he make such a compact with satan? He is as cowardly as he is wicked. When fear gets the better of him, he does not know himself."

The hermit spoke in slow and measured tones, which gave singular force to his words.

"He does not know himself!" inwardly repeated Spiagudry.

"I am sorry to hear a wicked man is a coward," said the headsman. "He is hardly worth the trouble of hating. You must fight a serpent ; you can but crush a lizard."

Spiagudry ventured a few words in his own defense.

"But, gentlemen, are you sure that this public functionary is quite what you depict him? Has he then a reputation . . ."

"Reputation!" exclaimed the hermit;  
"the most execrable in the province."

Benignus, disappointed, turned to the executioner.

"Master, what wrong has he done you? Your hatred has doubtless some foundation."

"You are right, old man, not to doubt it, as his business is something like mine, Spiagudry does all that he can to injure me."

"Oh, master, do not believe it. If this be the case, this man cannot have seen you, as I have, in the midst of your wife and charming children, welcoming the stranger to your hospitable board. Had he done so, he could never have been your enemy."

Spiagudry had scarcely finished this flattering speech than the woman, who until then had kept silence, exclaimed, in a bitter tone:

"The sting of the viper is never more venomous than when it is mingled with honey."

She turned again to her work; the crackling and harsh sound of the pincers filled up the intervals, as a chorus does in a Greek tragedy.

"This woman is mad, truly," muttered the guardian to himself, the only way he could account for the failure of his flattering speech.

"Bechlie is right, Doctor Fair Locks," cried the hangman. "I shall look upon you as a viper if you persist in defending this Spiagudry."

"Heaven help me, master! I wish in no way to defend him."

"All right. For you do not know how far his impudence leads him. Will you credit it, he has dared to dispute my right to Han of Iceland?"

"To Han of Iceland!" repeated the hermit.

"Yes; you have heard of that famous brigand?"

"Yes," replied the hermit.

"Well, every brigand belongs to the hangman, is it not so? What does this confounded Spiagudry do? He petitions that a price should be set on Han's head?"

"He asked for a price to be set on Han's head!" exclaimed the hermit.

"He had that audacity, simply to claim the body as his property, and to do me out of my rights."

"This is infamous, Master Orugix, daring to dispute a privilege which evidently belongs to you," said the hermit, with a smile that terrified Spiagudry.

"The trick is still more shabby from the fact that it would take the execution of such a

man as Han to bring me into notice and make my fortune, which I lost by Schumacker's escape."

"Certainly, Master Nychol."

"Yes, brother hermit, the day of Han's arrest come and see me, and we will sacrifice a fatted pig, to the success of my future honors."

"Willingly ; but I may not be free on that day ; besides, just now you sent ambition to the devil."

"So I did, father, when all my hopes were crushed by a Spiagudry and his petition."

"Ah!" replied the hermit in a strange voice. "So Spiagudry petitioned for a price to be set on Han's head."

This voice affected the old man as a toad charms a bird.

"Gentlemen," said he, "why judge so hastily? This may only be a false report."

"A false report!" exclaimed Orugix ; "it is only too true. The petition, signed by Spiagudry, and countersigned by the syndic, is now awaiting at Drontheim for the governor's decision."

The executioner was so well informed that Spiagudry was afraid to go further. He contented himself by inwardly cursing his young companion. Imagine the state of his mind when the hermit said, in a jeering tone :

“Master Nychol, what is the punishment for sacrilege?”

At these words Spiagudry felt as though his patch and wig had been dragged off. He anxiously listened for Orugix’s reply, who delayed doing so until he had emptied his glass.

“That depends upon the nature of the sacrilege.”

“If it should consist in the mutilation of the dead?”

The trembling Benignus expected at that moment the strange hermit would pronounce his name.

“Formerly,” answered Orugix, coldly, “they buried the criminal alive with the polluted body.”

“And now?”

“Now the punishment is milder.”

“Milder?” said Spiagudry, scarcely breathing.

“Yes,” answered the executioner, with the satisfied air of an artist who knows his work. “First an *S* is branded with a hot iron on the fleshy part of his legs.”

“And then?” interrupted the guardian, painfully uttering the words.

“Then they content themselves with hanging him.”

“Mercy upon us!” cried Spiagudry, “hang him.”



“Why, what is the matter with you? You look at me as a criminal does the gibbet.”

“I see with pleasure,” said the hermit, “that people are now guided by principles of humanity.”

At this moment, the storm which had ceased permitted them to hear the distinct sound of a horn from without.

“Nychol,” said the woman, “they are in pursuit of some criminal. That is the archers’ horn.”

“The archers’ horn!” repeated each of the guests, with different accents. But Spia-gudry’s bespoke the most profound terror.

A knock at the door of the tower put an end to these exclamations.

### XIII.

All that man needs is a signal; the elements of a revolution are all ready. When will it commence?

BONAPARTE.

Lœvig is a large town situated on the northern coast of Drontheim Gulf, and backed by a chain of hills, whose varied culture gave them the appearance of mosaics studded in the horizon. The place wore a dull aspect. The fishermen's cabins, built of wood and reeds; the conical huts of earth and flint, where the invalid miner retires, as soon as his savings permit, to end his days in sunshine and repose; the frail dwelling of the chamois hunter, who on his return thatches the roof and covers the walls with the skins of animals, line the streets, which, from their little breadth and windings, are longer than the town itself. In a part of the town, where little is to be seen but the ruins of a large tower, formerly the ancient fortress built by Horda the Archer, Lord of Lœvig, brother-in-arms of the pagan King Halfdan, and occupied in 1698 by the

syndic of the town, who was better accommodated than any one else, unless it were the white swan which came every summer and perched itself on the summit of the church belfry, having all the appearance of the white pearl placed at the extreme point of a mandarin's hat.

On the morning of the same day on which Ordener arrived at Drontheim, a person, likewise incognito, had landed at Lœvig. His gilded litter, though no arms were quartered, his four tall lackeys, armed to the teeth, had roused the curiosity of all parties, and made him the topic of conversation. The host of the "Moutte d'Or" (Golden Gull), the small tavern where this mighty person had alighted, assumed a mysterious air, and gave the same answer to every question, "I do not know," with a manner implying, "I know all, but you shall learn nothing." The tall lackeys were as mute as fish, and kept things as dark as the entrance of a mine. The syndic at first shut himself up in his tower, and awaited a visit from the stranger; but soon, to the surprise of the inhabitants, he twice called fruitlessly at the "Moutte d'Or," and lingered about the windows in hopes of a bow from the stranger. The gossips at once inferred that the visitor had made his rank known to the syndic. But they were mistaken. A messenger

had called at the syndic's, requesting him to affix his signature to the stranger's free pass. The syndic noticed that the green wax with which the packet was sealed was stamped with this device, two hands of justice crossed, supporting a mantle of ermine, with the coronet of a count surmounting a shield, around which were the collars of the Elephant and of the Dannebrog. The official dignitary was anxious to obtain the post of High Sheriff of the Drontheimhus, and determined to make the best of every chance. His advances met with no response, for the illustrious unknown would receive no one.

The second day of the traveler's arrival had nearly drawn to its close, when the host entered with a profound bow, saying that the messenger expected by his courtesy had arrived.

"Well," said his courtesy, "show him up, then."

A moment afterward the messenger entered, carefully closed the door, then bowing nearly to the ground, he waited in respectful silence until he should be addressed.

"I expected you this morning," said the other. "What detained you?"

"Your grace's interests, count. Have I any other care?"

"How is Elphège? How is Frederick?"

"They are very well."

"Well, well," interrupted his master. "Have you nothing more interesting to impart to me? What news at Drontheim?"

"Nothing; except that the Baron of Thorwick arrived yesterday."

"Yes, I know that he wished to consult that old Mecklenburger, Levin, on this projected marriage. Can you tell me what was the result of his interview with the governor?"

"At midday, when I left, he had not yet seen the general."

"What! arrived the evening before. You surprise me, Musdœmon. And has he seen the countess?"

"No, my lord."

"You then must have come across him?"

"No, noble master, besides I do not know him."

"Well, if no one saw him, how did you learn he was at Drontheim?"

"From his servant, who came on to the governor's palace."

"Where did he then dismount?"

"His servant said that his master at once left for Munckholm, after going into the Spladgest."

"For Munckholm. For Schumacker's prison. Are you certain?" exclaimed the

count, angrily. "I always considered that honest Levin was a traitor. For Munckholm! What can be the attraction there? Did he go to consult Schumacker? Did he . . ."

"My noble lord," interrupted Musdoemon, "there is no certainty that he went there at all."

"What? Well, then, what have you been saying? Do you joke with me?"

"Pardon, your grace, I simply repeated the words of the baron's servant. Lord Frederick, who was on guard yesterday at the fortress, asserts that he did not see the Baron Ordener."

"A convincing proof, indeed. My son does not know the viceroy's son. Ordener might have gone incognito."

"Yes, my lord; but Lord Frederick denies having seen any one."

The count grew calmer.

"That is different. My son asserts this, does he?"

"He assured me the same thing three times, and Lord Frederick's interests are those of your grace."

This remark completely allayed the count's anxiety.

"Ah!" said he, "I understand. The baron on arriving fancied a sail on the gulf, and his servant jumped to the conclusion that he had

gone to Munckholm. Besides, what could he want there? I alarmed myself needlessly. This carelessness about seeing old Levin proves that my son-in-law's affection for him is not so great as I imagined. You will scarcely believe it, my dear Musdœmon," continued the count, with a smile, "that I already fancied Ordener was in love with Ethel Schumacker, and I at once built quite a romantic intrigue upon this trip to Munckholm. But, thank Heaven! Ordener is not so foolish as I am. With regard to this young Danæ, how does Frederick get on with her?"

Musdœmon had conceived the same idea as his master concerning Ethel Schumacker, without being able to set them aside so easily. However, he was delighted to see his master smile, and he took great care not to disturb his serenity; on the contrary, he tried to better this good humor, the good humor of the great which is a boon to their favorites.

"Noble count, your son has failed with Schumacker's daughter, but it appears that another has been more fortunate."

The count hastily interrupted him.

"Another? what other?"

"Oh! some serf, peasant, or vassal."

"Are you sure?" exclaimed the count, whose hard and gloomy face had become radiant.

“Lord Frederick affirmed it, so has the countess.”

The count walked about the room rubbing his hands.

“Musdæmon, my dear Musdæmon, one more effort, and we shall accomplish our end. The shoot of the tree withered, we have but to overthrow the trunk. Have you any more good news?”

“Dispolsen has been murdered.”

The count’s face cleared entirely.

“Ah, you see one triumph succeeds another. Have they his papers? and, above all this iron casket?”

“I regret to say, your grace, that the murder was not committed by any of our people. He was assassinated and robbed on Urchtal Sands, and the crime is attributed to Han of Iceland.”

“Han of Iceland,” replied his master, whose countenance again became overcast. “What, that famous brigand that we are anxious to place at the head of the insurgents?”

“Himself, noble count; and from what I have heard we shall have some trouble to find him. In any case, I have found a man who will take his post, and also his name. He is a savage mountaineer, tall and strong as an oak, fierce and bold as a wolf in the snowy desert. It is impossible that so formidable



a giant should not resemble Han of Iceland."

"This Han of Iceland," asked the count, "is he then very tall?"

"That is the popular belief, your grace."

"I can but always admire, my dear Musdœmon, the art you display in making your plans. When does the insurrection burst forth?"

"Oh! very soon, your grace, at this moment perhaps. The royal tax has long displeased the miners, and they are eager for revolt. The first rise will be at Guldbranshal, will extend to Sund-Moër, thence to Konigsberg. In three days two thousand miners can be assembled; then the name of Schumacker will be their watchword; our emissaries have freely made known the same. The reserve forces from the south and the garrisons of Drontheim and Skongen will march forward. With their help you can readily quell this rebellion. The king will be grateful to you for this new and distinguished service, and for ridding him of this Schumacker, who is a constant source of anxiety to his majesty. This is the firm basis on which the whole structure is raised, which is to be completed by the marriage of the noble Lady Ulrica with the Baron of Thorwick."

When two rascals hold any private conversation, it is never of long duration, because

there is just enough manhood left to recoil from each other's villainy. Corrupted minds, when laid bare, themselves, revolt at the hideous spectacle. Crime shocks crime. When two evil spirits mutually confide their passions, their pleasures, and their interests, each one sees his own reflection, as it were, in a mirror. Their baseness humiliates them; every frightful coincidence finds an echo which never ceases to ring in their ears. However secret their interview may be, there are always two witnesses—God, whom they do not see; and conscience, which they feel.

The count dreaded these interviews with Musdœmon, because the latter never spared his master—he made him a party in every crime and every enterprise. The best courtiers spare their rulers even the appearance of evil by taking all on themselves, leaving to the great man the semblance of ignorance of a crime profitable to himself. Musdœmon, however, acted quite in a contrary way. He apparently rarely counseled his master, and always obeyed him. He knew the inmost depths of his master's soul, and the count knew his, and if compromised both should share in the blame. The head the count would most gladly have seen fall, after Schumacker's, would have been Musdœmon's;

the latter was well aware of this, and his master knew that he knew it.

The count had learned what he wished to know. He was satisfied, it only remained for him to dismiss Musdœmon.

"MUSDœmon," said he, with a gracious smile, "you are the most faithful and zealous of servants. All goes well, thanks to your care. I appoint you private secretary to the Grand Chancery division."

MUSDœmon bowed profoundly.

"This is not all," continued the count, "I am going, for the third time, to ask for the Order of the Dannebrog for you; but I am always afraid that your birth, your base parentage . . ."

MUSDœmon flushed, then turned pale, and hid his discomfiture by bowing again.

"Go then," said the count, presenting him his hand to kiss, "go, master private secretary, and write out your *placeat*. It may find the king this time in a good humor."

"Whether his majesty grant it or not, I feel most honored by your grace's bounties."

"Hurry, my friend, for I am anxious to leave. You must try to obtain more precise information about Han of Iceland."

MUSDœmon, after a third bow, half-opened the door.

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“Ah,” said the count, “I was forgetting. In your new position as private secretary, write to the grand chancery court, in order that the syndic of Lœvig may be dismissed from his post, for compromising his rank by cringing before strangers with whose position he is unacquainted.”

#### XIV.

The holy man who visits the shrine at midnight,  
The cavalier who subdues a fiery charger,  
Those who die to the dreaded sound of the  
trumpet,  
Those who die to the gentle murmur of prayers,  
Are the objects of his care, prodigal alike  
To the pious man, be he under a casquet or  
tonsure.

*Hymn to Saint Anselme.*

“Yes, master, we certainly ought to make a pilgrimage to the grotto of Lynrass. Could one have credited that the hermit I was cursing as an evil spirit would be our guardian angel, and that the lance which seemed to threaten our lives would serve as a bridge to carry us across the precipice?”

Benignus Spiagudry gave vent to his joy in Ordener's ears, in these burlesque terms of gratitude and admiration for the mysterious hermit. Our travelers had left the Accursed Tower, and had advanced some distance from the village of Vyglä. The difficulties of their steep and marshy way had been increased by heavy stones which the torrents had sent down from the hills. The day had not yet dawned,

but the bushes which crowned the rocks on each side of the way seemed dark objects cut in the sky, whose grayish hue pierces the bleak fogs of the morning.

Orderer was silent, for he was in that drowsy state which sometimes comes over pedestrians. He had not slept since the evening before, when he had taken a few hours' rest on a fisherman's bark on leaving the Spladgest for Drontheim. He was journeying to Skongen, but his thoughts had fled across the Gulf of Drontheim to that dark prison whose gloomy towers contained the only being in whom was centred all his hopes of happiness. Ethel's face was ever before him, waking and in dreams. He was now in a second kind of sleep, when all that is earthly seems to vanish, and his well-beloved was no less beautiful and pure, but free, happy, and more his own.

But on the road to Skongen this complete forgetfulness of self was not possible, for his steps were impeded from time to time by a quagmire, a stone, or a broken branch, recalling him from the ideal to the realities of life. Then he would half-open his weary eyes, and regret to set aside the heavenly journey for a toil over miserable roads, with nothing to console him for fancies past but the tress of Ethel's hair, resting near his heart.

“Master,” cried Spiagudry, in a loud voice, which, coupled with stumbling over the trunk of a fallen tree, roused Ordener, “fear nothing; the archers, under the hermit’s guidance, have gone forward to the right, and we are not within ear-shot. It is true that until now silence has really been imperative.”

“Indeed,” said Ordener, yawning, “you carry prudence rather far. It is at least three hours since we left the tower and the archers.”

“That is true, master; but prudence hurts no one. What would have become of me if I had answered the chief of that infernal band by saying, ‘I am Benignus Spiagudry?’ His voice was like that of satan demanding his new-born son in order to devour him. If at that terrible moment I had not had resource to a prudent taciturnity, where would I be now, noble master?”

“By my faith, old man, I do not think at that moment it was possible for any one to make you give up your name, even had they employed red-hot pincers.”

“Was I wrong, master? Had I spoken, the hermit—may Saint Hospice and the Saint Solitary bless him—would not have had the time to ask the chief of the archers if his escort were not part of the Munckholm garrison, a trivial question, only to gain time. Did you notice with what a curious smile the hermit

accepted the archer's sleepy reply, and invited them to follow him, saying he knew the fugitive Benignus Spiagudry's place of concealment?"

The guardian paused a moment as though to take a spring, for he again burst forth with increased enthusiasm:

"Good priest, worthy anchorite, practicing the principles of humanity and evangelical charity. And to think I was at first alarmed at his appearance, somewhat sinister certainly, when it concealed a heart so kind. Did you notice anything singular in the way he said to me on leaving with the archers, 'We shall meet again?' Solitude may give a strange ring to the voice, for, my lord," here Benignus almost whispered, "I know another solitary creature, that formidable being . . . But no, out of respect to that venerable hermit of Lynrass, I will draw no odious comparisons. His gloves—well, there is nothing extraordinary in wearing them when the weather is cold. His sea-water draught—I need not be astonished at that, for Catholic recluses have often singular rules, according to the celebrated verses of Urensus, the hermit of the Caucasus:

*'Rivos despiciens, maris undam potat amaram.'*

I wish these lines had recurred to me in that horrible ruin of Vygla; I might have



spared myself many false alarms. But who could collect his thoughts when seated at the hangman's board?—a creature held up to general execration, who only differs from the assassin by the frequency of his murders and his impunity from all consequences, combining all the atrocities of the brigand, without the bravery which the latter must display in his adventurous career; a being who offers you food and drink with the same hand with which he uses instruments of torture, and crushes the bones of his wretched victims between the thumbscrews and the boot. The vilest mendicant throws aside his rags with horror, if they have been defiled by this impure contact. When the chancellor signs his appointment, he flings it under the table in token of disgust. In France, should an executioner die, the sergeant of the provost would rather pay a fine of forty pounds than succeed him. At Pesth the condemned criminal Chorchill, when offered his pardon, with post of executioner, chose to be the victim in preference to being the hangman. Is it not notorious, noble young sir, that Turmeryn, Bishop of Maestricht, ordered a church to be purified because the headsman had entered it. Czarina Petrovna washed her face after each time she was compelled to witness an execution. You know that the kings of France

never degraded their soldiers, however criminal, by condemning them to be put to death by the executioner. And, finally, that is decisive, in the 'Descent of Saint George into Hades,' by the savant Melasius Iturham. Does not Charon rate the brigand Robin Hood as the superior of Philipcrass the headsman? Truly, master, if ever I come into power, I will suppress that functionary and re-establish the old custom of fines. For the murder of a prince, they should pay, as in 1150, fourteen hundred and forty royal double crowns; for the murder of a count, fourteen hundred and forty single crowns; for that of a baron, fourteen hundred and forty half crowns; the murder of a simple noble would be taxed fourteen hundred and forty ascalins; and that of a bourgeois . . ."

"Do I not hear the tramp of a horse behind us?" interrupted Ordener.

They turned round, and, as day had appeared during the long scientific soliloquy of Spiagudry, they could distinguish, about a hundred yards distant, a horseman, clothed in black, mounted on one of the small Norwegian ponies, who was waving his hand to them.

"For Heaven's sake, master!" said the timid Spiagudry, "let us push on. This man has all the appearance of an archer."

“What ! old man, we are two, and would you have us fly before one man ?”

“Alas ! twenty sparrow-hawks fly before one owl. Where is the glory of waiting to be overtaken by an officer of justice ?”

“And who says he is one ?” said Ordener, fearlessly. “Reassure yourself, my bold guide ; I can see who it is.—Let us stop.”

He had to yield, and ceased to tremble when he recognized the calm grave face of Athanasius Munder.

He greeted them with a smile, drew up, and said, in a panting tone :

“My dear children, I have retraced my steps on your account, and Heaven will no doubt prevent my absence, as it is with a good intent, from being prejudicial to those who require my aid.”

“Reverend sir,” answered Ordener, “we shall be happy to be of service to you.”

“It is I, on the contrary, young man, who would serve you. Would you inform me of the object of your journey ?”

“Reverend chaplain, I cannot do so.”

“I hope, my son, your denial means inability, and not distrust. Unhappy the man who is open to suspicion from his brethren when seen but once.”

The humility and impressiveness with which the minister spoke moved Ordener deeply.

"All I can tell you, my father, is that we are going to the northern mountains."

"That idea made me follow you. In those mountains there are bands of miners and hunters, a source of great danger to travelers."

"Well?"

"Well,—I know it is useless to try and turn a young man from a dangerous course, but my esteem for you has suggested to me that I may be of some service to you. The false coiner to whom I offered yesterday the last consolation had been a miner. He gave me a parchment on which his name was written, saying, this pass would be a safe conduct throughout the mountains. Alas! what use can this be to a poor priest who will live and die with prisoners? besides, *inter castra latronum*, one whose only defense should be found in patient prayers, Heaven's only weapons. I accepted the pass, as it is not right to wound a man who in a few short moments will neither give nor receive. The good Lord has deigned to inspire me, for to-day I am able to bring to you this parchment so that it may be with you in the dangers of the journey, and the gift of the dying may be a blessing to the traveler."

Orderer received the old priest's present with much emotion.

"Reverend chaplain," said he, "may Heaven listen to your prayers. I heartily thank you ; but," added he, grasping the hilt of his sword, "I carry my free pass here."

"Young man," answered the priest, "perhaps this scrap of paper will protect you better than your steel weapon. A penitent's last look is of more avail than the Archangel's sword. Adieu ; my prisoners are waiting for me. Be so good as to pray sometimes for them and for me."

"Holy priest," returned Ordener, smiling, "rest assured your prisoners shall be pardoned, as I have already told you."

"Oh, my son, pray do not speak so positively. Do not tempt Providence. A man can never know another's inmost thoughts, and you cannot tell what may be the decision of the viceroy's son. Alas ! he would never give admittance to an humble chaplain. Adieu, my son ; may blessings attend your journey, and may you sometimes give a thought to the poor priest, and offer up a prayer for the wretched prisoners."

## XV.

Welcome, Hugo; tell me,—have you ever seen such a terrible storm.

MATURIN—*Bertram.*

In a room belonging to the apartments of the governor of Drontheim, three of his excellency's secretaries had just sat down before a black table, loaded with parchments, papers, seals and inkstands, near which a fourth chair, empty, indicated that one of the clerks was late. They had already, for some time, been writing and thinking silently, when one of them said :

"You know, Wapherney, that they say this poor librarian Foxtipp is going to be discharged by the bishop, thanks to the letter of recommendation which you attached to the petition of Doctor Anglyvius."

"Are you romancing with us, Richard?" said the one of the two other secretaries that Richard had not addressed. "Wapherney could not have written in favor of Anglyvius, for the man's petition offended the general when I showed it to him."

"You told me so, indeed," replied Wapherney; "but I found on the petition the word '*tribuatur*' in the hand of his excellency."

"Truly?" cried the other.

"Yes, my friend; and many other decisions of his excellency, of which you have spoken to me, are likewise changed in the postscripts. Thus, on the petition of the miners, the general has written: '*negetur*.'"

"What! I don't understand; the general fears the turbulent spirit of these miners."

"Perhaps he wished to frighten them by severity. What makes me think so is that the petition of the priest Munder for the twelve condemned men is likewise negatived."

The secretary to whom Wapherney was speaking, here rose suddenly.

"Oh, I cannot believe you. The governor is very kind and showed much pity for these condemned . . ."

"Well, Arthur," said Wapherney, "read for yourself."

Arthur took the petition and saw the fatal sign of reprobation.

"Truly," said he, "I can hardly believe my eyes. I would like to re-present the petition to the general. On what day did his excellency postscript these?"

"Oh!" replied Wapherney, "I believe about three days ago."

"It was," said Richard, "on the morning which preceded the short visit and mysterious disappearance of Baron Ordener."

"Well," cried Wapherney, quickly, before Arthur had had time to respond, "if there is not even '*tribuatur*' on the ridiculous petition of Benignus Spiagudry!"

Richard burst into laughter.

"Is not that the old guardian of the corpses who likewise disappeared in such a singular manner?"

"Yes," replied Arthur; "they found in his charnel-house a mutilated corpse; that kind of thing justice punishes as a sacrilege. But a little Lap, who was his servant and who is now the only person in the Spladgest, thinks, with all the townspeople, that the devil has carried him for a sorcerer."

"So much," said Wapherney, laughing, "for a person who leaves a good reputation."

He subdued his laughter when the fourth secretary entered.

"Upon my honor, Gustave, you are very late this morning. You were, perchance, married yesterday?"

"Oh! no," said Wapherney, "he took the longest road, so as to pass, with his new mantle, under the windows of the lovely Bosily."

"Wapherney," said the new-comer, "I would you were right. But the cause of



my lateness is certainly less agreeable; and I doubt if my new mantle has produced any effect on the people I have just visited."

"Where do you come from, then?" asked Arthur.

"From the Spladgest."

"God is my witness," cried Wapherney, dropping his pen, "if we were not speaking of it just now! But one may speak of it for a joke—I cannot conceive how one can enter."

"And still less," said Richard, "how one can stay there. But, my dear Gustave, what did you see there?"

"Yes," said Gustave, "you are curious, if not to see, at least to hear about it; and you would be well punished if I refused to describe to you the horrors, at which you would shudder to assist."

The three secretaries urged Gustave, who allowed himself to be entreated, although his desire to relate to them what he had seen was infinitely stronger than their desire to hear.

"Very well, Wapherney, you can transmit my story to your young sister, who is fond of frightful things. I was led to the Spladgest by the crowd which had gathered there. They had just brought the corpse of three soldiers of the Munckholm regiment, and of

two archers, found yesterday four leagues in the gorges, at the bottom of the precipice of Carcadthymon. Some spectators assured me that the unfortunates composed the squad, sent three days ago, in the direction of Skongen, in search of the fugitive guardian of the Spladgest. If that is true, I cannot conceive how so many armed men have been assassinated. The mutilation of the corpses seems to prove that they have been thrown from the top of the rocks. It makes one's hair rise."

"What! Gustave, you have seen them?" asked Wapherney excitedly.

"I have them still before my eyes."

"And do they suspect who are the authors of this outrage?"

"Some persons think that it might be a band of miners, and assure us that they heard yesterday, in the mountains, the sound of the horn with which they signal."

"Really!" said Arthur.

"Yes, but an old peasant has destroyed this idea in making the remark that there are neither mines nor miners on the coast of Carcadthymon."

"And who could it be then?"

"They don't know; if the bodies were not entire, we might believe that it was some ferocious beasts, for they have on their limbs

long and deep scratches. They are just the same as on the corpse of the old man with the white beard which was brought to the Spladgest the morning before yesterday, the result of the frightful tragedy, which prevented you, my dear Leandre Wapherney, going to visit, on the other side of the gulf, your Hero of the hills of Larsynn."

"Well ! well ! Gustave," said Wapherney, laughing ; "but what about this old man?"

"On account of his great height, his long white beard, and a chaplet which he still clasps in his hand, although he was found otherwise absolutely naked, he is recognized, they say, as a certain hermit of Lynrass. It is evident that the poor man was likewise assassinated ; but for what object ? They no longer slaughter on account of religious opinion, and the old hermit possessed nothing in the world but his woollen robe and the good will of the public."

"And you say," replied Richard, "that this body is torn, like those of the soldiers, by the claws of a ferocious beast?"

"Yes, my friend ; and a fisherman swears that he noticed similar traces on the body of an officer, found assassinated, some days ago, on the Sands of Urchtal."

"That is singular," said Arthur.

"It is frightful," said Richard.

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“Come,” replied Wapherney, “silence and work, for I believe the general will soon return. My dear Gustave, I am very curious to see these bodies; if you are willing, this evening, as we go out, we will enter the Spladgest for a moment.”

## XVI.

While she within her lowly cot, which grac'd  
The Alpine slope, beside the waters wild  
Her homely cares in that small world embrac'd,  
Secluded liv'd, a simple, artless child.  
Was't not enough, in thy delirious whirl,  
To blast the steadfast rocks?  
Her, and her peace as well,  
Must I, God-hated one, to ruin hurl!  
Dost claim this holocaust, remorseless Hell!

GOETHE—*Faust*.

In 1675, twenty-four years before the commencement of this history, alas! a charming festival took place in the village of Thoctree, on the occasion of the gentle Lucy Pelnryh's marriage with the tall, handsome and worthy young man Carroll Stadt. One can truly say that they had loved each other for a long time, and who could fail to be interested in two such ardent lovers, whose hopes of happiness were about to be realized? Born in the same village, working together in the same fields, often Carroll in his childhood had fallen asleep and rested his head on Lucy's shoulder. When they grew older, on returning from work, Lucy leaned upon Carroll's

arm. Lucy was the most timid and at the same time the prettiest girl in the country. Carroll was the bravest and most noble fellow in the canton ; they loved, and they could no more recollect the time they had not been lovers than the day on which they came into existence.

But the marriage had not been compassed without some opposition. There were points of domestic interest, family feuds, and several other obstacles, so that for one entire year they were separated from each other. Carroll, thus parted from his Lucy, had suffered much, while Lucy shed many tears at her separation from Carroll before the happy day arrived when they were united never more to suffer or weep except together.

It was by saving her from great danger that Carroll at length won Lucy. One day he heard shrieks proceeding from the forest. They came from Lucy, who had been surprised by a brigand, the terror of all mountaineers. When Carroll arrived on the spot, this man was bearing her away. Carroll attacked this monster with a human face, who, from the singular roars that he made, resembling those of a wild beast, was called by the name of *Han*. Yes ; Carroll struggled with a creature whom all others avoided, for love gave him the strength of a lion. He rescued his beloved

Lucy, restored her to her father, who in turn gave him her hand.

Thus, all the villagers rejoiced on the day on which the union took place. Lucy alone seemed sad. Never had she cast so tender a look upon Caroll; but that look was as sad as it was tender, and, in the universal gayety, a subject of much wonderment. From time to time as her husband's joy increased, she became more pensive. "Oh, my Lucy!" exclaimed Caroll, after the holy ceremony, "the presence of that villain, which means sorrow for all who meet him, has been the source of my happiness." Some remarked that she shook her head, but said nothing.

Evening came; the newly-married pair retired to their new cottage, while dancing and rejoicing went on gayly upon the village green to celebrate the happiness of the bride and groom. The next morning Caroll Stadt had disappeared; a few lines in his handwriting had been brought to Lucy's father by a hunter from the Kole Mountains, who had met the bridegroom at daylight wandering about the shores of the gulf. Old Will Pelnyrh showed the letter to the pastor and the syndic, and the festival of the previous day was followed by gloom all around, and Lucy's mute despair.

This mysterious catastrophe threw the whole village into consternation, and the inhabitants

vainly endeavored to conjecture the cause. Prayers for the repose of Caroll's soul were said in the same church where he, a few days previously, had joined in the nuptial hymn. After nine months had passed in solitude and mourning, the Widow Stadt gave birth to a son, and that same day the village of Golyn was destroyed by the fall of an overhanging rock.

The birth of this son did not alleviate his mother's grief. Gill Stadt in no way resembled Caroll. His fierceness as a child gave promise of more desperate deeds. Sometimes a wild-looking little man—whom the mountaineers asserted was Han of Iceland—came to Widow Stadt's deserted cottage, and passers-by could then distinctly hear a woman's plaintive cry, mingled with the roars of a wild beast. The man took away young Gill, and after some months restored him to his mother, looking more gloomy and savage than ever.

Widow Stadt's feeling for this child was one of mingled tenderness and horror. Sometimes she would press him to her heart as a mother would her sole interest in life, and again she would repulse him, and call upon her Caroll, her own Caroll, to come to her. No one could understand what secret grief oppressed her.

Gill had attained his twenty-third year when he met Guth Sterson, and fell desperately



in love with her. Guth was rich, and he was poor. Then, he left for Rœraas, to become a miner, in order to gain money. Since then his mother had never heard of him.

One night as she was sitting at her spinning wheel, her only means of livelihood, her lamp had burnt low, and the widow was thinking of her son she longed to see. The poor mother loved her boy despite his ingratitude. How could she help loving him; when she had suffered for him so greatly?

She opened a cupboard, and took up a crucifix covered with dust. For a moment she cast a supplicating glance toward it, then suddenly thrust it aside with horror. "Pray!" she cried, "how can I pray? Wretched creature! you can only pray to Satan, for it is to hell you belong!"

She relapsed into her gloomy reverie, when a knock at the door roused her.

This was a rare event at the Widow Stadt's; for, thanks to the extraordinary life she led, the inhabitants of Thoctree had for many years considered her in league with the infernal spirits. Strange superstition of this century and this ignorant country. Misfortune had gained for her the same reputation for sorcery as science had done for the guardian of the Spladgest.

"If it were my son. If it were Gill!" cried she, and she sprang to the door.

Alas! it was not her son. It was only a little hermit, clothed in a robe of coarse cloth, the hood of which concealed everything but a black beard.

"Holy man," said the widow, "what do you want? You do not know in whose house you have sought entrance."

"Certainly I do," replied the hermit, in a harsh and too well-known voice.

And, tearing off his gloves, his black beard, and throwing back his hood, he disclosed a hideous face, a red beard, and hands armed with hideous claws.

"Oh!" shrieked the widow, and buried her face in her hands.

"Well!" cried the little man, "have you not in four-and-twenty years become accustomed to the husband you will see through all eternity?"

She muttered, horror-stricken, "Eternity!"

"Listen, Lucy Pelnryh; I bring you news of your son."

"Of my son! where is he? why does he not return?"

"He cannot."

"But you have some news. Alas! I will forgive you much if you can bring me this happiness."

"I bring you happiness, indeed, that I bring you," said the man, in a hollow voice; "for you are but a weak woman, and it astonishes me you could have brought forth such a son. Rejoice, then. You feared your son would walk in my footsteps; fear it no longer."

"What!" exclaimed the delighted mother; "my son, my beloved Gill, has then changed."

The hermit greeted her joy with a sardonic laugh.

"Oh! much changed," said he.

"Why does he not hasten to embrace me? Where did you see him? what was he doing?"

"He was sleeping."

The widow, in her extreme joy, never remarked the jeering tone, nor the horrible raillery of the little man.

"Why did you not awake him? saying 'Gill, go to your mother?'"

"His slumber was too deep."

"Oh! when shall I see him?" said she.

"Tell me, I entreat you, will he be here soon?"

The false hermit drew from beneath his robe a sort of cup of singular shape.

"Well, widow," said he, "drink to your son's speedy return."

The widow shrieked with horror. It was a human skull. She thrust forth her hands, but her tongue was paralyzed.

"No, no!" cried the man in a terrible voice, "do not turn away your eyes. Woman, look! You asked to see your son; behold all that remains of him."

In the red light of the lamp he held out the bare and polished skull of her son.

This poor heart had borne too many sorrows for one more to break it. She raised to the fierce hermit a fixed and stupid look.

"Oh! dead!" she feebly murmured, "dead. Let me die."

"Die if you wish, but remember, Lucy Pelnryh, the Thoctree Forest, remember the day upon which the demon, in seizing your body, gave your soul to hell! I am the demon, Lucy, and you are my spouse to all eternity. However, die if you wish."

In these superstitious countries people believed that evil spirits came among men and passed a life of crime, bringing calamity with them. Among other famous criminals, Han of Iceland had attained this appalling renown. It was also believed that if a woman by seduction or violence fell a prey to these demons in human form, she was doomed for all eternity to be his companion.

The widow was recalled to her senses by the details of these past events.

"Alas!" she mournfully exclaimed, "I cannot then escape even with the end of existence.

What did I do? Ah! my well-beloved Caroll, you know I was innocent. What was a young girl's strength compared to that of a demon?"

She continued; her looks were full of madness; the incoherence of her speech was increased by the convulsive trembling of her lips.

"Yes, Caroll, I never deceived you, but the demon held me as his own. Alas! I shall be punished to all eternity! No, I shall never join you again, you whom I never ceased to mourn. What is the good of dying? I must even then go with this monster to a world peopled with miscreants like himself. What have I done? My misfortunes will be held for crimes in all life to come."

The hermit cast looks of triumph and authority upon her.

"Ah!" cried she, turning to him, "this is but some fearful dream, inspired by your presence; for you well know that since the day of my loss, every night in which your spirit has visited me has been marked by hideous and terrible visions."

"Woman! woman! return to reason. It is as true as you are awake that Gill is dead."

The remembrance of her former misfortunes had for the moment effaced the mother's present trouble; these words recalled her to her loss.

"Oh! my son! my son!" she cried, in her agony, which would have touched the heart of any but the fiend who listened to her. "No, he will return; he is not dead; I cannot believe he is dead."

"Well, then, go and ask the rocks of Rœraas, that crushed him; ask the Gulf of Drontheim, which buried him."

The widow fell on her knees, and with an effort she cried:

"God! great God!"

"Silence! servant of satan."

The wretched woman ceased, and he continued:

"No longer doubt that your son is dead. He was punished in the same way as his father was before him. He let his heart, which should have been as hard as granite, be softened by a woman. I have possessed you, but I never loved you. My son has been deceived by the woman for whom he died."

"Dead!" cried she, "dead! Is it then true? Oh, Gill! child of my misfortune, nursed in mourning, never did your caresses respond to mine, my embraces met with no return. You always repulsed and fled from your mother—your poor, lonely mother. You made me forget my past sorrows by creating fresh ones. You left me for the demon, the

author of your existence and my widowhood. Gill, you never caused me to feel a single joy, and yet your death seems to me the most unbearable of all my afflictions. Now his memory seems to me a consolation, alas."

She could say no more, she buried her face in her black veil, and sobbed most piteously.

"Weak woman!" muttered the hermit. Then he exclaimed: "Conquer your grief, as I have crushed mine. Listen, Lucy Pelnryh, you weep for your son; I am already avenging him. His betrothed deceived him for a soldier of Munckholm garrison. The whole regiment shall perish at my hands. Behold, Lucy Pelnryh!"

He threw back his sleeves and showed the widow his deformed and blood-stained arms.

"Yes!" he cried, with a kind of a roar, "on Urchtal Sands and the gorges of Carcadthymon Gill's spirit can joyfully wander. Come, woman! look on this blood, and console yourself."

Suddenly recollecting himself, he exclaimed:

"Widow, has any one brought to you from me an iron casket? What, I sent you gold and I bring you blood, and still you weep! You cannot belong to the human race."

The widow, absorbed in her grief, kept silence.

“What!” said he, with a savage laugh, “mute and immovable! Why, you cannot be a woman, Lucy Pelnryh!” He grasped her arm to attract her attention. “Did any one bring you a sealed iron casket?”

The widow, with a passing show of attention, gave a negative sign with her head, and relapsed into her gloomy thoughts.

“Ah, the wretch! the faithless wretch!” cried the little man. “Spiagudry! that gold shall cost you dear!”

And, casting his hermit’s robe aside, he rushed from the cottage with a growl like that of a hyena in search of prey.



## XVII.

My lord, I tear my hair, I tear it weeping,  
because you leave me alone, and you go away  
into the mountains.

*La Dame au Comte*—Romance.

Ethel, meanwhile, had already counted four long and monotonous days since she wandered alone in the sombre garden of the donjon of Sleswig; alone in the oratorio, witness of many tears and confidant of many hopes; alone in the long gallery, where, once, she did not hear the midnight bell. Her old father accompanied her sometimes, but she was not the less alone, for the true companion of her life was absent.

Unhappy young girl! What had this young and pure soul done to be already the victim of so much misfortune? Accustomed to the world, to honors, riches, the joys of youth, and the triumphs of beauty, she was still in her cradle when taken to prison; captive beside a captive father, she had grown up seeing him decay; and to complete her misfortunes, for she knew no other slavery, love had come to find her in her prison.

Still, if she could have seen her Ordener beside her, what would liberty have been to her? Had she only known what a world separated them. And besides, her world, her heaven; were they not with her here in this donjon, under the black towers bristling with soldiers, towards which the passer-by threw not the least look of pity?

But, alas! for the second time, her Ordener was absent; and, instead of shortening the hours by recollection of the caresses and embraces, she passed the nights and the days weeping for his absence, and praying for him. For a widow has nothing but her prayers and her tears.

Sometimes she envied the wings of the swallow which came for food to the window of her prison. Sometimes she allowed her thoughts to soar in the clouds which came down rapidly from the north; then suddenly she would turn her head and cover her eyes, as if she feared to see the gigantic brigand appear, and the unequal combat begin.

Oh, how cruel it is to love when one is separated from the being one adores! Few hearts have known this sorrow in all its force, few hearts have known love in all its depth. When, stranger in a manner to one's own existence, a mournful solitude, an

immense void, and, for the absent one, I know not what fear of perils, of monsters and of deceptions; the different faculties which form our nature change and lose themselves in an infinite desire for the being we miss; all which surrounds us is out of our life. Meanwhile one breathes, one walks, one moves, but without thought. Like a strayed planet which has lost its sun, the body moves at random; the soul is elsewhere.

## XVIII.

On a large boulder these stern chiefs  
Dared hell with frightful vows;  
Near a black bull which they had just slaugh-  
tered,  
All, with their hands in the blood, swearing  
vengeance.

*Les Sept Chefs devant Thèbes.*

The coast of Norway so abounds in bays, creeks, reefs, lakes, and little capes, that they fatigue the traveler's memory and try the topographer's patience. Formerly, according to popular belief, every isthmus was haunted by some demon, every promontory had its guardian angel, for superstition mingles all beliefs, in order to add to its terrors. On the shores of Kelvel, some miles to the north of the grotto of Walderhog, the only spot it was said entirely free from the jurisdiction of spirits, either infernal or celestial. It was a meadow adjoining a river and sheltered by the rocks, on which could be seen the ruins of the castle of Ralph or Radulph the Giant. This wild little field, running down to the sea, and surrounded by rocks covered with

heather, owed its privilege to the name of an ancient Norwegian sire, its first possessor. What fairy, demon or angel, would dare to reside in a domain formerly occupied and protected by Ralph the Giant?

It is true that the name alone was sufficient to stamp the place, but a remembrance is not like a living spirit, and fishermen when overtaken by a storm would moor their barks in Ralph the Giant's Creek, and they had never seen the corpse-light gleam and glimmer, nor the fairy skim the heath in his flaming car, drawn by glow-worms, nor the saint ascend to the moon after his prayers.

If, for instance, the night after the storm, the surf of the sea and the heavy wind had permitted any mariner to take shelter in the bay, his superstitious fears might have been roused on seeing three men seated round a fire blazing in the midst of the meadow. Two of them wore the large felt hats and loose trousers of the royal miners. Their arms were bare to the shoulder, they had on tan-colored high boots, and a belt of red cloth sustained their curved sabres and pistols. Both had a bugle horn slung from the neck. One was an old and the other a young man. The elder's thick beard and the long floating locks of the younger, gave a wild expression to their faces, naturally hard and severe.

From the bearskin cap, greasy leather coat, tight breeches, the musket slung across his back, the axe gleaming in his hand, the bare knees, the bark sandals, it was easy to recognize in the companion of the two miners a mountaineer from the north of Norway.

Certainly, whoever had perceived from afar these three singular figures, upon whom the fire fanned by the ocean breezes, threw red and changing glare, could in good reason be frightened, without even believing in spectres or demons; it would be sufficient for him to believe in robbers and to be a little richer than a poet.

The three men frequently turned their heads toward the woods adjoining Ralph's clearing, and from the few words that could be heard it appeared they were awaiting the arrival of a fourth person.

"I say, Kennybol, we should not remain so undisturbed at this hour if we were waiting for Count Griffenfeld's messenger in a neighboring field, owned by Im Tulbytilbet, or over there in Saint Cuthbert's Bay."

"Do not speak so loudly, Jonas," said the mountaineer to the old miner. "A blessing on Ralph the Giant, for protecting us! May Heaven preserve me from setting foot in Tulbytilbet meadow. The other day I went

to pick some hawthorn there and I took mandragora by mistake, which began to bleed and scream, enough to drive me mad."

The younger man laughed.

"In faith, Kennybol! I believe the mandragora has had an effect on your poor, weak brain."

"Weak brain, indeed!" said the mountaineer, angrily. "Why, Jonas, he is ridiculing the idea of the mandragora. He laughs like an idiot when playing with a skull."

"Hum!" said Jonas. "Let him go to Walderhog Grotto, where the spirits of those murdered by Han of Iceland dance round his bed of dried leaves, gnashing their teeth to lull him to sleep."

"That is true," added the mountaineer.

"But," asked the young man, "Master Hacket, for whom we are waiting, promised us that Han of Iceland should put himself at the head of our insurrection?"

"So he promised," replied Kennybol; "and with the help of this demon we are sure to conquer all the green jackets sent from Drontheim and Copenhagen."

"So much the better!" exclaimed the old miner; "but I will not volunteer to be the sentinel on duty at night near his quarters."

At that moment a rustling among the brushwood attracted the speaker's attention. They

turned round, and by the light from the fire they recognized the new-comer.

"It is he—it is Master Hacket! Welcome, Master Hacket; we have been waiting for you; we have been over three-quarters of an hour at the meeting place."

This Master *Hacket* was a short, stout-built man, dressed in black, whose jovial looking countenance had a sinister expression.

"Well, my friends," said he, "I have been delayed by my ignorance of the way, and by the precautions it was necessary for me to take. I left Count Schumacker this morning. Here are three purses well filled with gold, which he requested me to give you."

The two elder men seized the money with avidity; the younger miner rejected the purse which Hacket offered him.

"Keep your gold, Master Envoy; I should lie if I said I rebelled for your Count Schumacker. I do so to free the miners from the royal tax; I revolt because my mother's bed has nothing more than a coverlet less rough than the coast of our good country, Norway."

Far from being disconcerted, Master Hacket replied smilingly:

"I will then send this money to your mother, my dear Norbith, so that she may have fresh covering to protect herself from the winter's blasts."



The young man bowed his acquiescence, and the envoy, clever orator, hastened to add:

"But take care not to repeat what you have so inconsiderately said: that it is not for Schumacker, Count of Griffenfeld, that you are taking up arms."

"However, however," replied the two elder men, "we know well that the miners are oppressed, but we know nothing of this count, this State prisoner."

"What!" quickly returned the envoy, "how can you be so ungrateful? You were groaning in your subterraneous caves, deprived of light and air, robbed of all your property, and the slaves of a heavy tax. Who came to your help, who animated your courage, and gave you gold and arms? Was it not my illustrious master, the noble Count of Griffenfeld, who is more unfortunate than yourselves? And now, although accepting his benefits, you refuse to assist him to regain his liberty at the same time as you do your own."

"You are right," said the young miner; "it would be acting unjustly."

"Yes, Master Hacket," added the two old men, "we will fight for Count Schumacker."

"Courage, my friends; rise in his name, let your benefactor's name be widely spread from one end of Norway to the other. Listen, everything favors your enterprise. You

will soon be rid of a formidable enemy, General Levin de Knud, the governor of this province. By my noble master, the Count of Griffenfeld's secret influence, he will at any moment be recalled to Berghen. Come, tell me, Kennybol, Jonas, and you, my dear Norbith, are all your comrades ready for action?"

"My brethren of Guldbranshal," said Norbith, "only await my signal. To-morrow if you wish . . ."

"To-morrow, then; let it be so. The young miners, of whom you are the chief, must be the first to raise the standard. And you, my brave Jonas?"

"Six hundred brave hearts from the Faroe Isles, who have been living for the last three days on chamois flesh and bear's grease in the forest of Bennallag, and only await a blast from the horn of their old captain, Jonas, of the borough of Lœvig."

"Very good; and you, Kennybol?"

"All those who carry an axe in the gorges of Kole, and scale the rocks bare-kneed are ready to join their brother miners when they need them."

"That is well. Let your companions know that victory is certain." Here the envoy raised his voice. "Announce to them that Han of Iceland will be their leader."

"Is that really the case?" exclaimed the three miners, in a tone of mingled hope and terror.

The envoy replied :

"I will meet you with your comrades four days hence at the same hour in the mine of Apsyl-Corh, near Lake Smiasen, under the Blue Star. Han of Iceland will accompany me."

"We will be there," answered the three chiefs. "May Heaven not forsake those who are led on by the demon."

"Heaven will never give you cause to fear," said Hacket, sneeringly. "Listen. You will find in the old ruins of Crag some banners for your troops. Do not forget the rallying-cry: '*Long live Schumacker! Let us save Schumacker!*' We must separate, for dawn will not be long in appearing. First swear to me that you will keep secret all that has passed between us."

Without a word the three chiefs pricked a vein in the left arm with the points of their sabres; then, seizing the envoy's hand, they each let a few drops fall from the wound upon it.

"You have our blood," said they to him.

Then the young miner cried :

"May all my blood run out as I swear at this moment, may an evil spirit meddle with my projects, may my arm be lead to avenge an injury, may bats inhabit my sepulchre, may

I, living, be haunted by the dead ; dead, profaned by the living ; may my eyes melt into tears like a woman's if ever I speak of what has taken place at this hour in Ralph the Giant's meadow. May the glorious saints deign to listen to me."

"Amen," repeated the old men.

Then they separated, and nothing remained to indicate the late meeting but the dying embers, the sparks from which were borne up beyond the solitary and ruined towers of Ralph the Giant.

## XIX.

THÉODORE.—Tristan, come this way.

TRISTAN.—It is a strange disgrace.

THÉODORE.—Did he recognize us?

TRISTAN.—I do not know, but am afraid so.

LOPE DE VEGA—*Le Chien du Jardinier.*

Benignus Spiagudry could not account for a well-constituted young man like his traveling companion, who had many years of life before him, actually seeking the formidable Han of Iceland. Often, during the journey he had broached the subject, but the young adventurer maintained strict silence on the motive of his journey. The poor man was not more fortunate in gaining information on other points which roused his curiosity with regard to the name of his young "master." "Call me Ordener," said the latter, in a tone that forbade further notice. Every one has some secret, and the worthy Spiagudry himself carried a certain mysterious casket hidden in his knapsack, and under his mantle; any remarks relating to this same

article would have been very objectionable to him.

It was now four days since they had left Drontheim, and they had not made much progress, owing to the state of the roads, and the various and circuitous routes which the fugitive guardian considered prudent to take. After leaving Skongen to the right, on the evening of the fourth day, they reached the shores of Lake Sparbo.

It was at once a magnificent and gloomy spectacle, reflecting as it did upon its surface the last rays of the sun and the first stars of night, and surrounded by a frame of high rocks, dark oaks, and pines. The aspect of a lake, in the evening, produces sometimes, at a certain distance, a singular optical illusion; as though a prodigious abyss, piercing the globe from side to side, allowed one to see the heavens through the earth.

Orderer stood, contemplating these old Druidical forests, which covered the mountainous borders of the lake like a head of hair, and the chalk huts at Sparbo, spreading over the sloping ground like a herd of white goats. He listened to the distant clatter of the forges,<sup>6</sup> mingled with the murmuring of the wind through the trees, the cries of the wild birds, and the sound of the waves beating on the shore. The last rays of the sun fell on an

immense mass of granite that rose majestically above the little village of Oëlmœ, its summit covered with ruined towers, looking like a giant wearied with his load.

When the soul is sad, melancholy sights please ; it makes all gloomy with its sadness. When an unhappy being is thrown among wild and high mountains, near to a sombre lake, at the moment when day is just about to disappear, he will see this solemn scene, this serious nature, in a certain way as though through a funeral veil : it will not seem to him as though the sun were going to bed, but as though he were dying.

Ordener remained silent and motionless, until his companion exclaimed :

“ Well done, young master, you cannot do better than meditate beside this Norwegian lake, which is renowned for the number of its sand-flies.”

This observation, and the gesture accompanying it, would have excited any one's laughter but a lover separated from his mistress perhaps never to see her again.

“ Besides,” continued the learned guardian, “ permit me to say that the day is declining, and we must hasten onward if we wish to reach Oëlmœ before twilight.”

There was reason in this. Ordener resumed his journey, while Spiagudry followed, carefully

noting the botanical and mineralogical curiosities which Lake Sparbo presented to naturalists.

“Sir Ordener,” said he, “if you believe your devoted guide, you will abandon your fatal undertaking ; yes, sir, and you will fix your abode upon the border of this curious lake, where we can live together among a crowd of learned doctors, for example we have the *stella canora palustris*, a singular plant which many savants believe fabulous, but which Bishop Arngrim claims to have seen and heard on the borders of Sparbo. Added to that we will have the satisfaction of living on the soil which contains the greatest amount of gypsum in all Europe, and where the hired assassins of Themis penetrate the least. Does that not make you smile, my young master? Come, give up your senseless journey ; for, without offense, your enterprise is perilous without profit, *pericillum sine pecunia*, that is to say stupid, and conceived at a moment when you had better have thought of other things.”

Ordener paid no attention to the poor man, and did not enter into the conversation except by the insignificant and distracted monosyllables which great talkers take for answers.

At last they arrived at Oëlmœ, to find the village all astir.



The inhabitants, blacksmiths, hunters, and fishermen had grouped themselves around a circular hillock, upon which several men were standing, one of whom was sounding a horn and waving a black and white banner above his head.

"It is doubtless some quack," said Spiagudry, "*ambubaiarum collegia, pharmacoporiæ*; some wretch who turns gold into lead, and wounds into ulcers. Let us see what invention of satan's is he going to sell these poor villagers? If these impostors contented themselves with making kings their dupes, all well and good, like Borch the Dane, and Borri the Milanese, who so completely tricked our own King Frederick III.,<sup>7</sup> but they must even rob the peasant as well as the prince."

Spiagudry was mistaken. On nearing the hillock they recognized the syndic, by his round cap tapering to a point, and his black gown. He was surrounded by some archers. The man who blew the horn was the town crier.

The fugitive guardian, much concerned, murmured :

"I never expected to find a syndic in this hamlet, Master Ordener. May Saint Hospice protect me! What is he going to say?"

He was not kept long in suspense, for the crier suddenly raised his squeaking voice, and

the little crowd of inhabitants of Oëlmœ listened religiously.

“In the name of his majesty, and by order of his excellency General Levin de Knud, governor, the high sheriff of the Drontheimhus makes known to all the inhabitants of towns, villages, and hamlets in this province, that—First, a reward of one thousand crowns is offered for the apprehension of Han, native of Klipstadur in Iceland, murderer and incendiary.”

A vague murmur broke out in the audience. The crier continued: “Second, A reward of four royal crowns is offered for the apprehension of Benignus Spiagudry, ex-guardian of Spladgest at Drontheim, who has been guilty of necromancy and sacrilege.

“Third, This edict shall be published throughout the province in all towns, villages, and hamlets by the different syndics, in order to facilitate its being carried out.”

The syndic took the edict from the hands of the crier, and added, in a solemn tone:

“The lives of these men are offered to whoever wishes to take them.”

The reader can well imagine what the wretched Spiagudry felt at this moment, and no doubt the signs of terror which he displayed would have drawn attention upon himself had

the villagers been less absorbed by the first part of the edict.

"A price on the head of Han!" cried an old fisherman, who had come to the spot with his dripping nets dragging behind him. "They may just as well, by Saint Usulph, set a price on the head of Beelzebub."

"To preserve the difference," added the hunter—easily recognized by his doublet of chamois skin—"only fifteen hundred crowns should be offered for the head with its horns of the last demon."

"Glory be to the blessed Mother in heaven," muttered an old woman, with her distaff in her hand. "I should like to see Han's head, so that I might assure myself that his eyes are two live coals, as report says."

"Yes, and truly so," added another old gossip; "he set fire to Drontheim Cathedral by merely looking at it. I should like to see the monster, with his serpent's tail, his cloven feet, and his wings like a bat."

"Who told you all these stories, good mother?" interposed the hunter. "I have seen this Han of Iceland in the ravines of Medsyhath. He is a man like ourselves, only he is as tall as a poplar tree of forty years' growth."

"Indeed!" said a voice in the crowd, with singular emphasis.

Spiagudry trembled at the sound, which proceeded from a little man, whose features were concealed beneath the broad-brimmed hat of a miner. His costume consisted of reed matting and seal-skin.

"By my faith," said a smith, with a loud laugh, "they may offer a thousand or ten thousand crowns, if they like, for his head, and whether he be four or forty feet high, I will not be the man to discover him."

"Nor I," said a fisherman.

"Nor I, nor I," repeated all the voices.

"Any one who may be tempted to do so," said the little man, "will find Han of Iceland to-morrow in the ruins of Arbar, near Smiasen, and after that in Walderhog Grotto."

"Are you quite sure of this, my good man?"

This question was put by Ordener, who had eagerly listened to the conversation, and also by a short man, clothed in black, with a jovial-looking countenance, who, at the sound of the crier's horn, had come out of the only inn in the place.

The little man in the broad-brimmed hat looked earnestly from one to the other, and then simply muttered:

"Yes."

"And what makes you so sure of the fact?" said Ordener.

“I know as well where Han of Iceland is as I know where Benignus Spiagudry is to be found ; neither one nor the other are far from here at this moment.”

All the poor guardian's former fears returned. He scarcely dared to look at the little man, and, doubtful lest his French wig was not sufficient disguise, he pulled Ordener by the cloak, and whispered :

“Master, in the name of Heaven, for pity's sake, let us hasten from this cursed village of satan.”

Ordener, equally surprised, was examining the little man, who was so anxious to conceal his features.

“This Benignus Spiagudry !” exclaimed the fisherman, “why, I have seen him at Drontheim Spladgest. He is tall. Is that the one for whom four crowns have been offered?”

The hunter laughed.

“Four crowns, indeed ! They won't get me to chase him for that. Why, I get more for a blue fox's skin.”

This comparison, which at any other time would have insulted Spiagudry, now helped to reassure him. He was about to renew his appeal, when Ordener, who had gained all the information he required, suggested that they proceed on their way.

They had intended to pass the night at Oëlmœ, but they tacitly agreed to continue their journey. Ordener's motive was to meet the brigand as soon as possible, and Spiagudry's to put a greater distance between the archers and himself.

Ordener could find no amusement in his companion's misadventures, and he broke the silence in a friendly tone.

"Old man, what is the name of the ruin where Han of Iceland is to be found to-morrow, according to the little man's account?"

"I do not know. I did not catch the words, noble master," answered Spiagudry, which was really the fact.

"I must then," continued the young man, "resign myself to give up seeing him until the day after to-morrow at Walderhog Grotto."

"Walderhog Grotto, sir, is the favorite haunt of Han of Iceland."

"Let us take that road," said Ordener.

"We must turn to the left behind Oëlmœ peak. In less than two days we shall reach Walderhog."

"Do you know this singular man," said Ordener, adroitly, "as well as he seems to know you?"

The question again aroused Spiagudry's fears, which had been partially dispelled by the distance now between them and Oëlmœ.

"No, master, really not at all," replied he, in a quivering tone. "Only I noticed he had a very strange voice."

Ordener endeavored to reassure him.

"Fear nothing, old man," said he; "serve me well, and I will protect you; and should I conquer Han, I not only promise you your pardon, but you shall have the whole of the reward, a thousand royal crowns, handed over to you."

Honest Benignus loved life extraordinarily; but he had a prodigious regard for gold. Ordener's promises were like magic words to him: they not only banished his fears, but they roused his hilarity, which evinced itself in long dissertations, accompanied by peculiar gesticulations and learned quotations.

"Master Ordener," said he, "even if Over-Bilseuth, the Babbler, himself asserted to the contrary, I would maintain that you are a good and honorable young man. What can be more worthy and glorious, *quid cithara, tuba, vel campana dignius*, than nobly to risk your life for the deliverance of your country from this monster, this brigand in whom all other demons, brigands, and monsters seem united? Let them not say to me that you are influenced by sordid interests, for the noble Ordener is ready to abandon the profits of his victory to the old man who will be his guide

to Walderhog Grotto ; at least, within a mile of it ; for you will allow me to await the result of your noble enterprise at the village of Surb in the forest, just a mile from Walderhog. At the news of your glorious victory there will be similar rejoicings throughout Norway to those displayed by Vermund the Outlaw, when from the summit of this same Oëlmœ peak he perceived the beacon fire which his brother Halfdan had lighted as a token of his pardon on Munckholm Tower."

At this name Ordener quickly interrupted him.

"What ! can you see Munckholm Tower from there?"

"Yes ; twelve miles to the south, between those mountains which our fathers called Escabelles de Frigga. About this hour the beacon light is clearly visible."

"Is that really so?" exclaimed Ordener, elated at the idea of seeing the place in which his happiness was centred. "Old man, is there any pathway leading up to the summit of the rocks?"

"Yes ; it leads from the forest we are about to enter to the rocks, and thence by steps hewn out of the face of the granite by Vermund the Outlaw's companions. The ruins of his castle adjoining can be seen by moonlight."



"Well, then, you must point out the way, for we shall pass the night in those ruins whence the tower of Munckholm is to be seen."

"Do you really mean it?" said Benignus.  
"The fatigues of the journey . . ."

"Old man, I will help you, for my step was never firmer than it is now."

"My lord, think of the obstructions, the stones, the night . . ."

"I will go first."

"Perhaps some criminal, some wild beast, some enormous reptile, some hideous monster . . ."

"I did not take this journey to avoid monsters."

Spiagudry was far from being pleased at the idea of straying so near to Oëlmœ. Ordener was enchanted at the thought of seeing Munckholm beacon, and perhaps the light shining through Ethel's window.

"My young master," said Spiagudry, "pray abandon this project. I have a presentiment it will bring you misfortune."

Ordener's wishes made him deaf to the old man's warnings.

"That is enough," said he, impatiently; "you undertook to serve me well, now show me the way to this place."

"We shall soon be there," said the guardian, compelled to obey.

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Indeed, the path soon appeared, and they entered, but Spiagudry noticed, with astonishment mingled with fear, that the high weeds were bent and broken and that the old path of Vermund the Outlaw appeared to have been recently traversed.

## XX.

LEONARDO.—The king asks for you.

HENRIQUE.—Indeed?

LOPE DE VEGA—*La Fuerza latimosa.*

Before a table scattered with papers and open letters, General Levin de Knud was deeply buried in thought. A secretary seated near him appeared to be waiting for orders. The general now and then struck the rich carpet at his feet with his spurs, now and then played in a distracted way with the decoration of the Elephant which hung at his neck from the collar of the Order. From time to time he opened his mouth to speak, then paused and struck his forehead, and looked again at the open dispatches which covered the table.

“The devil!” cried he, at last.

This exclamation is followed by an instant of silence.

“Who would have thought that these demon miners would have taken such steps? They must have been instigated to open

revolt by some secret influence. Really, Waptherney, this is very serious. Do you know that five or six hundred scoundrels from the Faroe Isles have left their mines, under the command of an old bandit named Jonas. A young fanatic, called Norbith, has placed himself at the head of the malcontents from Guldranshal, while at Sund-Moer, Hubfallo, and Konigsberg, the disaffected spirits only wait for the signal to rise. Perhaps they are already in arms. The mountaineers have taken part, under the leadership of Kennybol, a brave old fox from Kole. According to the syndic's dispatches, that desperate villain, for whose head a price has been set, that formidable Han, is the chief of the insurgents. What do you say to all that, Waptherney?"

"Your excellency," said Waptherney, "knows what measures . . ."

"There is one circumstance in this deplorable affair for which I cannot account, and that is, according to their assertion Schumacker is the author of this revolt. This seems to astonish no one, yet to me it is the most astounding thing of all. It is difficult to credit that my loyal Ordener could find pleasure in a traitor's company. Meanwhile they assure me the miners have risen in his name, and his name is their watchword, calling him at the same time by all the titles the

king has deprived him of. All this seems authentic. But how was it that Countess d'Ahlefeld knew all these details six days ago, when the first real symptoms of the insurrection had scarcely shown themselves in the mines? This is very strange. We must be ready for any emergency. Give me my seal, Wapherney."

The general wrote three letters and sealed them.

"Send this to Colonel Voethain, at Munckholm, in order that his musketeers may at once march against the insurgents. This is for the Governor of Drontheim, that he may keep strict watch over the grand chancellor. I must see Schumacker myself, and question him. Dispatch this letter to Major Wolhm, at Skongen, for him to send a party against the rebels. Go, Wapherney, and see that my orders are carried out."

The secretary went out, leaving the governor in deep reflection.

"All this is very grave," thought he. "The miners in revolt there, the intriguing wife of the chancellor here, that silly Ordener—no one knows where. Perhaps he is traveling in the midst of the rebels, leaving Schumacker, who is conspiring against the State, under my protection, and his daughter, for whose sake I recalled the company of soldiers commanded

by Frederick d'Ahlefeld, whom Ordener accuses of . . . Why, this very company is now in a position to check the first movement of the rebel column. Walhstrom, where it is quartered, is near to Lake Smiasen and the ruins of Arbar. That is one of the points which the insurgents will have to secure."

At this point in his reverie, the general was disturbed by the noise of the opening of a door.

"Well, what is it, Gustave?"

"General, a messenger is inquiring for your excellency."

"What has occurred? some fresh disaster? Show the messenger in."

The messenger introduced, handed a packet to the governor.

"Your excellency," said he, "on the part of the viceroy."

The general tore open the cover.

"By Saint George," exclaimed he, "they must be all mad. The viceroy summons me to Berghen on a pressing matter, by order of the king. This pressing business comes at a good time, I must say. 'The grand chancellor, who is at present in Drontheimhus, will supply your post.' A substitute in whom I have no confidence. 'The bishop will assist him.' Really, Frederick chooses two famous

governors for a province in a state of rebellion. A couple of gownsmen, a chancellor and a bishop! However, the invitation is express, it is the order of the king. I must go. But I will see Schumacker before leaving and question him. I feel sure that they wish to entangle me in a mass of intrigue. I have an infallible compass, which never deceives me—my conscience."

## XXI.

It seemed that everything took voice to  
accuse him of his crime.

*Cain—A Tragedy.*

“Yes, lord count, we shall meet him to-day  
in the ruins of Arbar. A number of circum-  
stances tend to verify the truth of what I heard  
by chance at Oëlmœ.”

“Are we far from this ruin of Arbar?”

“They are near Lake Smiasen. The  
guide assured me we should be there by  
midday.”

Thus spoke two horsemen, wrapped in  
brown cloaks, who since the early morning  
had been following narrow winding tracks  
through the forest, situated between Lakes  
Smiasen and Sparbo. A mountain guide,  
with his horn round him, and armed with an  
axe, preceded them on his little gray pony,  
and four men armed to the teeth brought up  
the rear, toward whom the horsemen occasion-  
ally turned, as though afraid of being over-  
heard.



"If this Iceland brigand is really in the ruin of Arbar," said one of the riders, in a respectful tone, "it will be a great point gained, for the difficulty is to meet this unconquerable being."

"You think so, Musdœmon? Suppose he rejects our offers."

"Impossible, your grace! gold and a free pardon. What brigand would resist that?"

"You know that this is not an ordinary rascal. Do not judge him by yourself; should he refuse, how will you fulfil the promise you gave the night before last to the three chiefs of the insurrection?"

"Well, in that case, your grace, not likely, if once we meet our man. Have you forgotten that a false Han of Iceland two days hence will await me at the meeting place arranged with the three chiefs, the Blue Star, at a spot not far from the ruin of Arbar?"

"You are right, always, my dear Musdœmon," said the count. Then each became absorbed in his own reflections.

Musdœmon, whose aim was to keep his master in good humor, endeavored to distract his thoughts by questioning the guide.

"My good man," said he, "what is that sort of broken stone cross standing up behind those young oaks?"

The guide, a stupid looking fellow, shook his head, and turning round, said :

“Oh, master, that is the oldest gibbet in Norway. Holy King Olaüs had it constructed to hang a judge who had made a compact with a robber.”

Musdœmon noticed on his master's face an impression quite different to that which he expected from the simple words of the guide.

“It is a very curious tale,” continued the latter. “Old mother Oise told it to me. The brigand was deputed to hang the judge, and . . .”

The poor guide did not perceive that the tale he was relating to the travelers, instead of amusing them, was almost an insult to them.

“Enough! enough!” Musdœmon interrupted him: “we know that story well.”

“Insolent rascal!” muttered the count. “He knew all about the tale. Ah, Musdœmon, you shall pay me for this.”

“Did your grace speak?” said Musdœmon with an obsequious air.

“I was considering the best way of obtaining the Order of the Dannebrog for you. The marriage of my daughter Ulrica with Baron Ordener would be a good occasion.”

Musdœmon was overwhelming with thanks and protestations.

“By the by,” continued his grace, “let us go back to my affairs. Do you think that order of instant recall has reached the Mecklenburger?”

The reader perhaps remembers that the count was in the habit of designating under this name, General Levin de Knud, who was indeed a native of Mecklenburg.

"Our affairs, indeed!" repeated Musdœmon to himself; "as though my affairs were not *our affairs*. My lord count," continued he, aloud, "I should not think that the vice-roy's messenger has reached Drontheim before this, and that General Levin will not be long in starting."

The count assumed an affectionate tone.

"That recall, my dear Musdœmon, was a master-stroke of yours. It is one of your best conceived and executed plans."

"The credit belongs to your grace as much as to me," replied Musdœmon, anxious to implicate the count in every intrigue.

His master knew this perfectly well, but wished to appear ignorant. He began to smile.

"My dear private secretary, you are too modest; but nothing will ever make me forget your eminent services. Elphège's presence and the Mecklenburger's absence assure my triumph at Drontheim. I am now the governor of the province; and if Han of Iceland accepts the command of the insurgents, which I will offer him myself, it is I who in the king's eyes will return with all the glory of having

suppressed a dangerous insurrection and captured a formidable brigand."

They spoke thus in whispers, when the guide turned round and said :

"My lords, to our left, on yonder hillock, Biord the Just had Vellon the Forked-tongued beheaded in the presence of the army. This traitor had succeeded in withdrawing all the king's true defenders, and substituted the enemy into the camp, so that he alone might have the credit for saving King Biord's life."

All these reminiscences of ancient Norway seemed not to Musdæmon's taste, for he roughly interrupted the guide.

"Come, come, my good fellow, be quiet and follow the road without turning; what matters it to us about old ruins and dead trees? You annoy my master with your women's tales."

## XXII.

PUCK.—Now the hungry Lyon rores,  
And the Wolfe beholds the Moone ;  
Whilest the heavy ploughman snores,  
All with weary taske fore-done.  
Now the wasted brands doe glow,  
Whil'st the scritch-owl, scritchng loud,  
Puts the wretch that lies in woe,  
In remembrance of a shrowd.  
Now it is the time of night,  
That the graves, all gaping wide,  
Every one lets forth his spright,  
In the Church-way paths to glide.

*Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 5.*

SHAKESPEARE.

Let us retrace our steps. We left Ordener and Spiagudry with difficulty ascending the narrow path up the rocks leading to Oëlmœ peak. This rock, on account of its curved appearance, was called by the Norwegian peasants, "The Vulture's Neck," for from a distance this enormous mass of granite really had that appearance. As our travelers neared the more elevated portions of the rock, the forest was replaced by heather, and the grass by moss ; the wild brier, the broom, the holly

bush, by the oak and the birch trees. Vegetation gradually became more and more scanty, a sure sign that the summit was nearly reached. The bare rock was plainly visible through the thin covering of earth, so much so that what might be termed the skeleton of the mountain was disclosed.

“Master Ordener,” said Spiagudry, whose mind wandered to all sorts of subjects, “this ascent is very fatiguing, and it shows my devotion in following you. But it seems to me that I see there to the right a magnificent *convolvulus*. How I should like to examine it. Why is it not daylight? I must say it is a great piece of impertinence to value so learned a head as mine at only four miserable crowns. Certainly the celebrated Phædra was a slave, and Æsop, according to Doctor Planudus, was sold like a beast in the market-place. Who would not be proud to have something in common with Æsop?”

“And with the celebrated Han, too,” added Ordener, smiling.

“By Saint Hospice!” answered the guardian, “do not speak so lightly of his name. I can assure you, I can well dispense with this last conformity. It would be singular if the price set on his head were to return to Benignus Spiagudry, his companion in misfortune. You, Master Ordener, are more generous than

Jason, for he did not bestow the golden fleece on the pilot of the Argo, and certainly your enterprise, of which I do not clearly see the object, is no less perilous than that of Jason."

"But," said Ordener, "since you are acquainted with Han of Iceland, give me some information respecting him. You have already told me he is not a giant, as is commonly reported."

Spiagudry interrupted him.

"Stop, master, did you not hear a noise behind us?"

"Yes," calmly replied the young man. "Do not alarm yourself; it is only some wild beast, who, alarmed at our approach, has fled through the brushwood."

"You are right, my young Cæsar; it is long since a human being ever set foot in these parts. Judging from the weight of its tread, the animal must have been a big one. It was an elk or a reindeer, for Norway abounds with them. Wild cats are also to be found. I saw one that was brought to Copenhagen, and it was a monstrous size. I must describe this fierce creature to you."

"My dear guide," said Ordener, "I should infinitely prefer you to give me a description of another monster, no less fierce, that horrible Han of Iceland."

"Lower your voice, my lord. How can my young master pronounce that name so carelessly? You do not know . . . My God, sir! Listen!"

As he said these words Spiagudry pressed close to Ordener, who distinctly heard a roar similar to that which so frightened the timid guardian on the stormy night they had quitted Drontheim.

"Did you hear?" said he, gasping for terror.

"Certainly," replied Ordener; "but why should you tremble? It is the cry of some wild beast; perhaps only the cry of one of the very tiger cats you were speaking about just now. Do you expect to pass through such a place without hearing something from the hosts we are troubling with our company? I assure you, old man, that they are more afraid of us than we are of them."

Spiagudry seeing his companion's calmness was reassured a little.

"Come, you may be right, but that beast's roar very much resembles a voice . . . Allow me to say, master, that you must have been inspired by some evil genius when you thought of mounting to Castle Vermund. I fear misfortune will happen to us on the Vulture's Neck."

"Fear nothing as long as you are with me," said Ordener.



“Oh! nothing seems to alarm you; but it was only the blessed Saint Paul who could handle vipers with impunity. You did not even remark when we entered this cursed pathway how grass which had been lately trodden down had not even had time to rise since some one had passed.”

“I confess I scarcely noticed it; besides, I do not allow my courage to fail me at the sight of a blade of grass bent down more or less. We shall soon leave the heather behind us, and we shall then not be troubled with footsteps, or the cries of wild beasts. Pluck up your courage, and gather your strength together, for the ascent up to the summit will be far more difficult than this.”

“It is not that it is steeper, master; but the learned traveler Suckson relates that the way is blocked up by masses of rock and heavy stones, which it is impossible to remove, and difficult to pass over. There is close to Malaër postern a huge triangular block of granite, that I am anxious to see. Schoenning claims to have three ancient Runic letters seen upon it.”

The travelers had already climbed the rock for some time when they reached a small dilapidated tower, which barred the way and which made Spiagudry remark to Ordener:

“That is Malaër postern, master. This deep and narrow way presents many other

curious constructions which show what were the ancient fortifications of our Norwegian lords. This postern, which was always guarded by four men-at-arms, was the first outwork of the fort of Vermund. Speaking of door or postern, the monk Urensus makes a singular remark ; has not the word *janua*, which comes from *Janus*, the gates of whose temple are so celebrated, generated the word *Janissairy*, guardian of the door of the Sultan. It would be very curious if the name of the mildest prince in history had passed to the most ferocious soldiers on the earth."

The guardian continued his discourse as they painfully wended their way over rolling stones, sharp flints, and damp grass. Ordener forgot all his fatigue in thinking of once more gazing on Munckholm Tower even at a distance ; suddenly Spiagudry exclaimed :

" Ah ! I see it ; this single view recompenses me for all my toils. I see it, my lord, I see it."

" What then ?" asked Ordener, who at that moment was thinking of his Ethel.

" Eh ! the triangular pyramid mentioned by Schoenning. I will, with Professor Schoenning and Bishop Isloef, be the third savant who has had the good luck of examining it, only it is annoying that it is not moonlight."

On approaching the famous block, Spiagudry uttered a cry of disappointment and

terror. Ordener, surprised, looked with interest at the new subject of his emotion ; but the archæological guardian was unable to reply for some time.

“ You thought the stone barred the way,” said Ordener ; “ you ought to be pleased to find such is not the case.”

“ This removal is what alarms me,” said Benignus, in a doleful tone.

“ Why?”

“ Why ! master,” replied the guardian, “ do you not see that the pyramid has been totally misplaced, and rests upon that side on which are the Runic letters ? I am indeed unlucky.”

“ It is indeed a misfortune,” said the young man.

“ And added to this,” said Spiagudry, excitedly, “ the overthrow of this mass proves the presence of some supernatural being ; no human creature in Norway could have moved it, save one man . . .”

“ My poor guide, you are again panic-stricken. Who knows but what this stone may have been in this position for a century?”

“ It is certainly one hundred and fifty years since the last observations were made,” said Spiagudry, more calmly. “ Look, master, it seems to have been freshly done, for the ground where it formerly rested is still damp. See, sir.”

Ordener, eager to arrive at the ruins, impatiently dragged him away from the marvelous, and tried by kind words to soothe his fears.

"Listen, old man. You can settle down on the borders of the lake, and pursue your important studies, when you have received the thousand royal crowns—the price on Han's head."

"You are right, master, but do not be too sure of victory. I must give you a little advice, which may be of use in mastering this monster."

Ordener quickly neared Spiagudry.

"Advice! what?"

"The brigand," whispered Spiagudry, casting uneasy looks around, "drinks out of a skull which hangs from his belt. This skull is the skull of his son, for the profanation of whose body I am now pursued."

"Raise your voice, for I can hardly catch your words. Fear nothing. Well, about this skull?"

"It is of this skull that you must gain possession," again whispered the guardian. "The monster has many superstitious ideas respecting it. Once the skull is within your grasp, you may do what you please with its owner."

"That is all very well, my good man; but how am I to obtain it?"

"By stratagem, master ; when the monster is sleeping, perhaps."

Orderer interrupted him.

"That is enough. I cannot avail myself of your good advice. I never attack a sleeping foe. My sword is my defense."

"My lord, my lord ! has it not been proven that the Archangel Michael used strategy to overcome satan ?"

Here Spiagudry suddenly stopped, stretched forth his hands in terror, and said almost inaudibly :

"Oh, Heaven ! oh, Heaven ! what do I see there, down there ? Look ! master ; is not that a little man walking in this same path before us ?"

"My faith," said Orderer, straining his eyes, "I see nothing."

"Nothing, sir ! Ah ! but the path winds round, and he has disappeared behind the rock. Go no farther, I entreat you, I beg you.

"Watch over us, Saint Hospice !" said Spiagudry, who, in all perilous occasions, remembered his favorite patron.

"Truly if this pretended person has so quickly disappeared, that shows that he has no intention of waiting for us ; and if he flies that is no reason for us to fly. You have taken a scared owl for a man," said Orderer.

“I certainly believed I saw a little man; it is true that the moonlight often produces singular illusions. It was in this light that Baldan, Lord of Merneugh, mistook the white curtain of his bed for the shade of his mother; which induced him to go the next day and declare his parricide to the judges at Christiania, who were going to condemn the innocent page of the defunct. Thus, one might say that the moonlight saved the life of the page.”

No one forgot the present in the past better than Spiagudry. One thought from his vast memory was sufficient to banish all impressions of the moment. Thus the story of Baldan dissipated his terror. He continued in a tranquil voice:

“It is possible that the moonlight has cheated even me.”

Meanwhile they reached the summit of Vulture's Neck, and began to see again the ridge of the ruins, which the curve of the rock had hidden from them whilst they were ascending.

Let the reader not be astonished if we often encounter ruins on the summit of mountains in Norway. Whoever has explored mountains in Europe could not have helped frequently noticing the remains of forts and castles, perched on the crests of the highest peaks,

like old vultures' nests or old eagles' eyries. In Norway especially, in the century to which we are transported, these sort of aerial constructions astonish as much by their variety as by their number. They were sometimes of long dismantled walls, winding like a belt around a rock, sometimes with slender and pointed tourelles surmounting the point of a peak, like a crown ; or, on the white head of a high mountain, with stout towers grouped about a large donjon, and presenting, from a distance, the appearance of an old tiara. One might see near the slender lancet vault of a Gothic cloister, the heavy Egyptian pillars of a Saxon church ; near the square towered citadel of a pagan chief, the pinnacled fortress of a christian lord, near a fort-like castle ruined by time, a monastery destroyed by war. Of all these edifices, of a mixture of architectures, singular and almost unknown nowadays, daringly constructed on places apparently inaccessible, nothing is left but débris to render in any way testimony of the power and the nothingness of man. Perhaps in their interiors there has passed many things more worthy of being related than all these commonplaces ; but the events have passed away, the eyes which have seen them are closed ; the traditions die away with years, like a fire that has never been replenished ;

and who therefore can penetrate the secret of the centuries?

The domain of Vermund the Proscribed, where our two travelers arrived at this moment, was one of those to which superstition attached the most astonishing tales and miraculous adventures. By its walls of flint-stone set in a cement grown harder than the stone, one could easily discover that it had been built about the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Of its five towers, only one was standing in all its grandeur; the four others, more or less dilapidated, and covering the summit of the rock with their débris, were connected by lines of ruins, and which likewise indicated the limits of the courts in the enclosure of the castle. It was very difficult to penetrate into this enclosure, obstructed with rocks, blocks of stone, and shrubs of all kinds, which, running from ruin to ruin, covered the fallen walls with their tufts, or allowed their long flexible branches to hang over the edge of the precipice. It is in these branches that often, they say, come and sit, in the moonlight, bluish ghosts, guilty spirits of those who have been voluntarily drowned in the Sparbo. Frightful secrets which must have been more than once witnessed by the hardy fishermen, when, in order to profit by the sleep of the sea-dogs,<sup>a</sup> they dared to push their boat close



under the rock of Oëlmœ, which loomed above their heads, like a broken arch of a gigantic bridge.

Our two adventurers cleared, but not without difficulty, the wall of the domain, through a break, for the ancient door-way was filled, encumbered with ruins. The only tower which, as we have said, remained standing, was situated at the extremity of the rock. "This was," said Spiagudry to Ordener, "that from the summit of which one could see the beacon of Munckholm." They turned towards it, although the darkness was at this moment complete. The moon was entirely hidden by a large black cloud. They were about to climb the breach of another wall in order to enter what had been the second court of the castle, when Benignus stopped suddenly, and roughly seized Ordener's arm, with a hand that trembled so violently that the young man himself was disturbed.

"What now?" said Ordener, surprised.

Benignus, without replying, pressed his arm more violently still, as though to demand silence.

"But—" continued the young man.

A new pressure, accompanied by a big gasp half suppressed, decided him to await patiently until this new terror had passed.

At last Spiagudry said in a suppressed voice:

“Well, master, what say you of that?”

“Of what?” said Ordener.

“Yes, my lord,” continued the other in the same tone, “you must now sorely repent having mounted here!”

“No, indeed, my brave guide; I fondly hope to mount higher still. Why do you wish me to repent it?”

“What, my lord, have you then seen nothing?”

“Seen! what?”

“Have you not seen?” continued the honest guardian, with an ever increasing access of terror.

“No, truly!” replied Ordener in a tone of impatience; “I have seen nothing, and I have heard nothing, but the noise of your teeth, which chatter with terror.”

“What! there, behind that wall, in the shadow, two eyes flaming like comets, which are fixed on us. You have not seen them?”

“On my honor, no.”

“You did not see them move about—first up and then down, and finally disappear among the ruins?”

“I do not know what you mean; what does this signify, anyhow?”

“What, Master Ordener, you are not aware that only one man in Norway has eyes that gleam in the darkness?”

“ Well, what of it ? Who is this individual with cat’s eyes ? Is it Han, your formidable Icelander ? So much the better if it is he ! It will spare us the journey to Walderhog.”

This “ so much the better ” was not to Spiagudry’s taste. He could not forbear revealing his secret thought by this involuntary exclamation :

“ Ah, master, you promised to leave me at the village of Surb, a mile from the place of combat.”

Ordener’s kindly nature understood, and he smiled.

“ You are right, old man ; it would be unjust to compel you to take part in my danger. Fear nothing. You see Han of Iceland everywhere. A wild cat’s eyes would shine quite as brilliantly as this man’s.”

For the fifth time Spiagudry was reassured, either by Ordener’s natural explanation or by the contagious tranquility of his young companion.

“ Ah ! my lord, without you I would have been dead ten times from fear in climbing these rocks. It is true that without you I would not have been tempted.”

The moon, which reappeared, enabled them to see the entrance of the highest tower, at the base of which they had arrived. They entered, lifting a heavy curtain of

ivy, which showered upon them sleeping lizards and old blackbirds' nests.

The guardian heaped a quantity of dried branches together, and striking a light with two flints, in a very short time a clear flame arose, which reflected on the whole of the objects within the tower.

Nothing remained but a thick circular wall covered with moss and ivy. The ceilings of the four stories had fallen to the ground. A spiral staircase without any rail wound round the interior of the wall, and led to the battlements. At the first glimmer of light a number of screech-owls and ospreys flew away with frightened and discordant cries, while huge bats at intervals fanned the flame with their ashen-colored wings.

"Our hosts do not give us a very gay reception," said Ordener; "but do not alarm yourself again."

"Me, my lord!" returned Spiagudry, seating himself by the fire; "do you think I fear an owl or a bat—I who have lived among dead bodies, and not been alarmed at vampires? I have no fear of the living. I confess I am not brave, but I am not superstitious. Master, let us think of supper."

Ordener could only think of Munckholm.

"I have a few provisions here," said Spiagudry, drawing his knapsack from under his

cloak ; " if your appetite equals mine, this black bread and dry cheese will soon disappear.

" I see that we will be obliged to stop short of the limits of the law of the French king, Philippe Le Bel: *Nemo audeat comedere propter duo fercula cum polagio*. I dare say there are plenty of gulls' and pheasants' nests on the top of the tower. But how to get there by a dilapidated staircase which could at the most bear nothing but sylphs?"

" Meanwhile," answered Ordener, " it must bear me, for I will certainly mount to the top of this tower."

" What! master! for the sake of some gulls' nests? Pray do not be so imprudent. It is not necessary to kill one's self for the sake of a better supper. Besides, after all, you may only find screech-owls' eggs."

" I am thinking of something more than your birds' nests. Did you not tell me that Munckholm could be seen from the summit of this tower?"

" That is right, young master; to the south. Now I know the reason for this journey; you wish to settle some geographical point. Remember, a scholar may endure fatigue for the sake of science, but he should never court danger. I entreat you not to risk your life on this dangerous staircase, upon which a crow would not dare to perch."

Benignus did not care to be left alone in the base of the tower. As he rose to take Ordener's hand, his knapsack resting on his knees fell among the stones and gave out a clear ring.

"What is it that rings so in your knapsack?" asked Ordener.

This question, upon a point so delicate for Spiagudry, removed all desire he had to restrain his young companion.

"Go," said he, without answering the question; "since, in spite of my prayers, you persist in mounting to the top of the tower, have care of the breaks in the staircase."

"But," answered Ordener, "what can be in your knapsack to make such a metallic sound?"

This indiscreet insistence disgusted the old guardian supremely and he cursed the questioner at the bottom of his soul.

"Ah! noble master," answered he, "how can you bother about a paltry iron shaving plate striking against a flint? Since I cannot shave you," he dared to add, "do not hurry down, and have care to hold to the ivy which mantles the walls. You will see the beacon of Munckholm midway between the two Escabelles de Frigga."

There was nothing more appropriate that Spiagudry could have said to banish all other

ideas from the mind of the young man. Ordener, throwing aside his mantle, started towards the staircase, the guardian following him with his eyes, he seemed to glide like a vague shadow, to the top of the wall, where he stood lighted by the fitful glare of the fire and the calm moonlight.

Then, kneeling and opening his knapsack :

“My dear Benignus Spiagudry,” said he, “while that young lynx is not looking and you are alone, you must hasten to break the inconvenient iron envelope which prevents your taking possession, *oculis et manu*, of the treasure doubtless enclosed in this casket. When it is released from this prison, it will be less heavy to carry and easier to hide.”

Then, armed with a large stone, he was about to break the lid of the coffer, when a ray of light falling on the iron seal which closed it, stopped the antiquarian guardian.

“By Saint Willebrod the Numismatic, if I am not mistaken,” cried he, briskly rubbing the rusty lid, “these are surely the arms of Griffenfeld. I was about to commit a great folly in breaking this seal. There, perhaps, is the only model which remains of these famous arms, destroyed in 1676 by the hand of the headsman. The devil! I must not touch this lid. Whatever may be the value of the object which it contains (unless, against

all probability, they are Palmyra coins or Carthaginian medals), this is certainly more precious. I, then, am the sole proprietor of the now abolished arms of Griffenfeld! I must carefully hide this treasure. By-and-by, perhaps, I will discover the secret of opening the casket, without committing vandalism. The arms of Griffenfeld! Oh, yes! surely there is the hand of justice, the balance on a field of gules. What luck!"

At each new heraldic discovery which he made by removing the rust from the old seal, he gave a cry of admiration or an exclamation of contentment.

"By means of a dissolvent, I will open the lock without breaking the seal. They are doubtless the treasures of the ex-chancellor. If some one, tempted by the bait of four syndical écus, meets me and arrests me, it will not be difficult for me to ransom myself, so this lucky casket will have saved me."

As he spoke thus, he raised his head mechanically. Suddenly his grotesque face changed, in the twinkling of an eye, from an expression of foolish joy to that of stupefied terror. His eyes became fixed, his mouth remained gaping, and his voice died away in his throat like an extinguished light.

Facing him, on the other side of the fire, with his arms crossed and his hands resting



upon the handle of a stone axe, stood a little man with a red beard, clothed in skins stained in many places with blood, with his piercing eyes fixed savagely upon him.

"Yes, it is I," said the little man. "And so the casket would be a means of safety, would it?" He added, with a bitter smile, "Spiagudry, is this the road to Thoctree?"

The unhappy man tried to articulate a few words.

"Thoctree—my lord, my master—I was going there . . ."

"You were on your way to Walderhog," replied the other, in a voice of thunder.

Frantic with fear, Spiagudry gathered all his strength to make a negative sign with his head.

"You were conducting an enemy to me. Thank you; it will be but one man less in the world. Fear not, oh, faithful guide; he will follow you."

The wretched man endeavored to cry for help, but could only utter a vague and confused moan.

"Why does my presence alarm you? Why, you were seeking me. Listen! do not cry, or you are a dead man."

The little man brandished the axe over his head, while he continued, in a voice resembling the torrent as it bursts from a cavern:

"You have betrayed me!"

"No, your grace—no, your excellency," at last Benignus was able with difficulty to pronounce the beseeching words.

The other uttered a loud roar.

"Ah! so you would deceive me. Do not attempt it any more. Listen! I was on the Spladgest roof when you made a compact with that idiot. It was I whose voice you twice heard; it was I whom you again heard in the storm; it was I you saw in the Tower of Vyglá."

The guardian threw a look about him as though to call for help. The little man continued:

"I would not let those Munckholm soldiers escape me. You I could always find. It was I that you saw wearing the miner's hat at Oëlmœ; it was I whose voice resounded and whose form you saw as you ascended this path, and it is I who am here before you!"

Alas! the unfortunate man was more than convinced; he rolled at the feet of his inexorable judge, crying in a stifled tone: "Mercy!"

The little man, his arms still crossed, bent upon him a fierce glance more burning than the flame of the fire.

"Ask your casket to secure your safety," answered the other, with an ironical laugh.

"Mercy, my lord; mercy, I pray!" repeated the dying Spiagudry.

"I warned you to be faithful and silent. You have been faithless, but silent you shall be in the future, I promise you."

The guardian understood the full sense of these horrible words, and uttered a low moan.

"Fear not; I will not separate you from your treasure."

At these words, unloosing his leather belt, he passed it through the handle of the casket, and suspended it round Spiagudry's neck, who bent with the weight.

"Now! to what fiend would you confide your soul? Hasten to call upon him, lest another demon should first take possession of it."

The desperate old man, unable to utter a single word, embraced the other's knees with a thousand gestures of terrified supplication.

"No! no!" he said. "Listen! faithful Spiagudry. Do not grieve at leaving your young companion without a guide. I promise he shall follow you. You are only going before to show him the way. Come!"

Grasping the miserable wretch in his arms of steel, he carried him outside the tower as a tiger carries a long snake; and a moment after a terrible cry echoed through the ruins, mingled with the sounds of horrible laughter.

### XXIII.

Yes, one can easily picture the faithful lover, the distant object of his idolatry. But, alas! the scenes of waiting, the partings, the thoughts, the sweet and bitter memories, the enchanted dreams of the lovers! Who can picture them?

MATURIN—*Bertram.*

Meanwhile the adventurous Ordener, after having just escaped falling twenty times in his perilous ascent, arrived on top of the flat circular wall of the tower. At his unexpected approach, hundreds of black owls flew away in a cloud, and some loose stones, struck by his foot, fell into the darkness, and bounded upon the projecting rocks with dull and distant noises. The next moment Ordener concentrated his eyes upon the depths of the abyss deepened by the blackness of the night. His eyes, noticing on the horizon all these great shadows of which the moon barely lighted the sombre outlines, had for a long while sought to distinguish the vapors from the rocks and the mountains from the clouds; his imagination had animated all the gigantic

forms, all the fantastic appearances which the moonlight gave to the mountains and the mists. He had listened to the distant confused murmur of the lake and the forests mingled with the rustle of the dried weeds disturbed by his feet, and to all these dead voices by which nature speaks during the sleep of man and in the silence of the night. But, although this scene, unknown to himself, animated his entire being, other thoughts replaced them. His foot had scarcely been placed on the summit of the wall, and his glance turned towards the southern heavens when an indescribable joy filled his soul, for he perceived, beyond the angle of two mountains, a ragged point of light on the horizon, like a red star. It was the beacon of Munckholm.

Those who do not understand the happiness which came to the young man, are not destined to taste the true joys of life. His heart fluttered with happiness, his breast swelled, palpitating violently, and he breathed with difficulty. Immovable, with steady eyes, he watched the star of consolation and hope. It seemed to him that this ray of light coming through the night from the abode of which held all his happiness, brought to him something from his Ethel. Ah! doubtless, spirits have sometimes, through time and space, some mysterious communication. In vain the

material world raises barriers between two beings who love: in the ideal world of love they appear to each other in absence, they are united in death. What effect can corporal separation, or physical distance, have on two hearts invincibly leagued together by the same thought and a common desire? True love may suffer but cannot die.

Who has not stopped hundreds of times during rainy nights under some dimly lighted window? Who has not passed and repassed before some door, drawn with delight to some house? Who has not of an evening suddenly turned aside to follow, in the windings of a deserted street, a fluttering dress or a white veil suddenly recognized in the shadow? He who has not felt these emotions can only say that he has never loved.

In the presence of the distant beacon of Munckholm, Ordener meditated. His first joy had been succeeded by a sad and ironical satisfaction; a thousand different sentiments rushed upon his disturbed mind. "Yes," he said to himself, "man must struggle long and laboriously in order to at last see a star of happiness in this immense night. She is there then! She sleeps, she dreams, she thinks of me, perhaps! But who will tell her that her Ordener is now, sad and alone, standing in darkness above an abyss? Her Ordener, who

has nothing but a lock of her hair upon his breast, and a vague gleam on the horizon." Then, glancing at the red glare from the large fire burning in the tower, which came through the breaks in the wall: "Perhaps," murmured he, "from one of the windows of her prison she throws an indifferent glance at the distant flame of this fire."

Suddenly a piercing shriek and a loud burst of laughter were heard, as though below him on the edge of the abyss; he turned quickly and saw that the interior of the tower was deserted. Then, worried about the old man, he hastened to descend; but before he had taken many steps on the staircase there came to him the rumbling noise as though a heavy body had fallen in the deep waters of the lake.

## XXIV.

Count Sancho Diaz, Seigneur de Saldana wept bitter tears in his prison.

Full of despair, in his solitude, he denounced King Alphonse.

“Ah! sad moments, when my white hair reminds me how many years I have already passed in this horrible prison.”

*Spanish Romances.*

The sun was setting; its horizontal rays cast the black shadow of the bars of their prison window upon Schumacker's cloak and Ethel's crape dress. They were seated together near a Gothic crucifix, the old man on a large Gothic arm-chair, the young girl upon a stool at his feet. The prisoner seemed to dream in his usual melancholy position. His wrinkled brow rested on his hands and one could see nothing of his face except his white beard which hung in disorder on his breast.

“Father,” said Ethel, who sought in every way to distract him, “my lord and father, I have this evening had a dream of a happy future. See! lift your eyes, my noble father, and look at the beautiful sky.”



"I do not see the sky," answered the old man, "except through the bars of my prison, and so I cannot see your future, Ethel, except through my misfortunes."

Then his head, lifted for a moment, fell again on his hand and they were silent.

"My lord and father," continued the girl in a timid voice a moment later, "are you thinking of Sir Ordener?"

"Ordener," said the old man, as though seeking to recall he of whom she was speaking.

"Ah! I know who you mean; well?"

"Do you think he will soon return, father? He has been gone a long time. This is the fourth day."

The old man sadly bowed his head.

"I believe that when we have counted four years from the time he departed, we will be as near his return as we are to-day."

Ethel grew pale.

"My God! Do you believe he will never come back?"

Schumacker made no reply. The girl repeated her question with beseeching accent.

"Has he not promised that he would return?" said the prisoner roughly.

"Yes, without doubt, my lord!" said Ethel, impressed.

"Well! How can you expect his return? Is he not a man? I believe the boaster may

come back a corpse, but I do not think that he will return in the spring."

Ethel, seeing her father relapsing into melancholy, was reassured; he had in his childlike innocent heart a voice which spoke the disappointed philosophy of an old man.

"Father," said she with excitement, "Sir Ordener will come back, he is not a man like other men."

"What do you know about him, girl?"

"Only what you know, my lord and father."

"I know nothing," said the old man; "I heard words from a man which promised the actions of God."

Then he added, with a bitter smile:

"I have reflected over that, and I see that it was too fine to believe."

"And I, my lord, have believed it, for the very reason that it was fine."

"Ah! girl, if you were what you should be, Countess of Tongsberg and Princess of Wollin, surrounded as you would be by a train of fine traitors and interested adorers, that credulity would be a great danger to you."

"Father, it is not credulity; it is confidence."

"One can easily perceive, Ethel, that you have French blood in your veins."

This idea led the old man, by an imperceptible transition, to his memories, and he continued with a sort of self-satisfaction :

“ For those who have degraded your father more than he had been raised, cannot deny that you are the daughter of Charlotte, Princess of Tarentum, and that one of your ancestresses was either Adèle or Edèle, Countess of Flanders, whose name you bear.”

Ethel was thinking of quite a different subject.

“ Father, you ill-judge noble Ordener.”

“ Noble ! my daughter, what reason have you for using that word ? I have made nobles who have been very vile.”

“ I do not mean to say, my lord, that he is a noble of the nobility.”

“ Then do you know whether he is descended from a jarl or from a hersa ?”

“ I am as ignorant as you are, father. Perhaps,” continued she, “ he is the son of a serf or of a vassal. Alas ! they paint crowns and lyres on the velvet of a footstool. I only wish to say, with you, my lord, that he is noble of heart.”

Of all the men which she had seen, Ordener was the one about whom Ethel knew the most and the least at the same time. He had appeared to her in her destiny, so to speak, as one of the angels who visited the early

mankind, enveloped at the same time in light and mystery. Their very presence awakened their nature, and they adored them. Thus Ordener had allowed Ethel to see what men hid the most, his heart; he had been silent upon the subject of which men usually boast the most willing; his love had satisfied Ethel, and she had had faith in his words. She loved him, she had given him her life, she knew everything of his heart and did not know his name.

"Noble of heart!" repeated the old man, "noble of heart! That nobleness is higher than that given by kings; it is given by God. He is less prodigal than they."

Here the prisoner raised his eyes toward his broken armorals, and added:

"And he never takes back."

"So, father," said the girl, "he who has the one can easily console himself for the loss of the other."

This thrilled the old man and gave him courage. He answered in a firm voice:

"You are right, my girl. But you do not know that disgrace considered unjust by the world is sometimes justified by our inner conscience. Such is our miserable nature, once unfortunate, there arises within us, to reproach us for our faults and errors, a crowd of voices which lay dormant in prosperity."

"Do not speak thus, my illustrious father," said Ethel, deeply shocked; for, at the altered voice of the old man, she felt that he had let escape the secret of one of the sorrows. She raised her eyes toward him, and, kissing his cold withered hand, she continued softly:

"You very severely judge two noble men, Sir Ordener and yourself, my revered father."

"You decide lightly, Ethel. They would say that you do not know that life is a grave affair."

"Have I done wrong then, my lord, to render justice to generous Ordener?"

Schumacker knitted his brow with a dissatisfied air.

"I cannot, my daughter, approve of your thus giving your admiration to an unknown, whom you doubtless will never see again."

"Oh!" said the girl, upon whom these icy words fell like a weight, "do not believe that. We will see. Is it not for you that he has gone to face this danger?"

"I am like you, as I have admitted, prone to at first believe in his promises. But, no, he will not go, and therefore he will never return to us."

"He will go, my lord, he will!"

The tone in which the young girl pronounced these words was almost that of a challenge. She felt insulted through her

Orderer. Alas ! she was too sure, in her soul, of what she proclaimed.

The prisoner continued, unmoved :

“ Ah, well ! If he goes to fight this brigand, if he faces this danger, it will be all the same ; he will not come back.”

Poor Ethel ! How a word spoken heedlessly will sometimes open afresh the secret wound of a torn heart ! She bowed her pale face to hide from the cold glance of her father two tears which, in spite of her, escaped from her swollen eyelids.

“ Oh, father !” murmured she, “ at the very moment that you are speaking thus, this unfortunate noble may be dying for you.”

The old minister shook his head as a sign of doubt.

“ I do not believe it any more than I desire it ; besides where would be my crime ? I would have been ungrateful towards this young man, as many others have been ungrateful towards me.”

A deep sigh was Ethel's only response ; and Schumacker, leaning towards his desk, continued, with a distracted air, to tear up some sheets of Plutarch's *Lives of Illustrious Men*, a volume of which, already torn in twenty places, and covered with notes, was before him.

A moment later the noise of an opening door was heard, and Schumacker, without

turning, cried out his habitual refusal: "Let no one enter! Leave me; I do not wish any one to enter."

"It is His Excellency, the Governor," answered the voice of the usher.

Indeed, an old man, dressed in the full uniform of a general, bearing at his neck the collars of the Elephant, of the Dannebrog and of the Golden Fleece, advanced towards Schumacker, who half arising, repeated under his breath: "The governor! the governor!" The general respectfully saluted Ethel, who, standing beside her father, watched him with a disturbed and uneasy look.

Perhaps, before going further, it would be well to recall in a few words the motive of this visit of General Levin to Munckholm. The reader has not forgotten the annoying news which tormented the old governor as related in Chapter XX. of this true tale. Upon receiving it, the necessity of questioning Schumacker at once rose in the mind of the general; but he did not decide to pursue this course without extreme repugnance. The idea of going to torment an unfortunate prisoner, already subject to many torments, and whom he had seen so powerful, to probe the secrets of the unhappy, however guilty, was displeasing to his kind and generous heart. However, the service of the king was urgent; and he

ought not to leave Drontheim without hearing whatever new information might be had by questioning the apparent author of the miners' insurrection. Therefore upon the evening preceding his departure, but only after a long confidential interview with the Countess d'Ahlefeld, the governor decided to see the captive. Approaching the castle, the idea that the interests of the State, the possibility of his being accused of neglect and perhaps the crafty words of the grand chancellor, ran through his head. He therefore mounted to the donjon of the Lion of Sleswig full of projects of severity ; he promised himself that he would be to the conspirator Schumacker as though he had never known the Chancellor Griffenfeld, keep back all memories, and, in keeping with his assumed character, to speak to his former favored and powerful confrère in the tone of an inflexible judge.

However, as soon as he enters the apartment of the ex-chancellor, the venerable, albeit somewhat morose, face of the old man struck him ; Ethel's gentle yet haughty face moved him ; and the first sight of the two prisoners had already dissipated half his severity.

He advanced towards the fallen minister, and involuntarily extended his hand, saying without noticing that the other did not respond to his politeness :



"Greeting, Count Griffenf . . ." This was the surprise of an old habit. He continued precipitately: "Lord Schumacker!" —Then he stopped, quite satisfied and quite exhausted with such an effort.

He paused. The general sought in his brain some words severe enough to follow the severity of this beginning.

"Well," said Schumacker, at last, "you are governor of the Drontheimhus?"

The general, a little surprised at being questioned by he whom he had come to question, made an affirmative sign.

"In that case," continued the prisoner, "I have a complaint to make to you."

"A complaint! What? What?" And the face of the noble Levin assumed an expression of interest.

Schumacker continued with an air of ill-humor:

"An order of the viceroy prescribes that I shall be left free and unmolested in this donjon."

"I know the order."

"My lord governor, some one, nevertheless, persists in importunating me and in entering my prison."

"Who?" cried the general; "name to me he who dares . . ."

"You, my lord governor."

These words, pronounced in a haughty tone, wounded the general. He replied in an almost irritated voice :

“ You forget that my powers, when exercised in the service of the king, know no limits.”

“ If they do not,” said Schumacker, “ those of respect for the unfortunate should. But men do not know that.”

The ex-grand chancellor spoke thus, as though he were speaking to himself. He was heard by the governor.

“ Very true, very true ! I was wrong, Count Griff . . . My Lord Schumacker, I mean to say ; I should leave anger to you, since I have power.”

Schumacker was silent for an instant.

“ There is,” he continued thoughtfully, “ in your face and your voice, my lord governor, something which reminds me of a man whom I have known already. It was a long time ago. There are none but I who remember that time. It was during my prosperity. There was a certain Levin de Knud, of Mecklenburg. Did you know this mad-man ?”

“ I knew him,” replied the general, without feeling.

“ Ah ! you remember him. I thought one never remembered men except in adversity.”

"Was he not a captain in the royal militia?" continued the governor.

"Yes, a simple captain, nevertheless the king was very fond of him. But he thought only of pleasure and showed no ambition. He had a singularly extravagant mind. Could one conceive a similar moderation of desire in a favorite?"

"But that might be conceived."

"I like him well enough, this Levin de Knud, because he did not annoy me. He was friends with the king as with any other man. It was said that he loved him only for his own pleasure, and not at all for his fortune."

The general tried to interrupt Schumacker; but he continued, either from persistency or from stubbornness, or because memory was indeed strongly awakened in him:

"Since you knew this Captain Levin, my lord governor, you doubtless know that he had a son, who died quite young. But do you remember what happened at the birth of this son?"

"I remember much better what happened at his death," said the general in an altered voice, and shading his eyes with his hand.

"But," continued the indifferent Schumacker, "it is a fact known to few persons, and which will show you all the sadness of

this Levin. The king wished to hold the child at the font, in baptism; would you believe that Levin refused? He did more; he chose for the godfather of his son an old mendicant who begged at the gates of the palace. I have never been able to comprehend the motive for such an act of insanity."

"I will tell you," answered the general. "In choosing a protection for the soul of his son, this Captain Levin doubtless thought that a beggar is nearer God than a king."

Schumacker reflected an instant and said :

"You are right."

The governor tried again to lead the conversation to the object of his visit. But Schumacker prevented him.

"Pray, if it is true that this Levin of Mecklenburg is not unknown to you, let me talk to you about him. Of all the men that I knew in the time of my greatness, he is the only one of whom the recollection brings to me neither disgust nor horror. If he pushed his singularity almost to folly, he was none the less, by his noble qualities, a man such as one seldom meets."

"I do not agree with you. This Levin was no better than other men. There are many others more worthy than he."

Schumacker crossed his arms, and raised his eyes to heaven.

"Yes, that is how they all are ! One cannot praise before them a man worthy of being praised without their seeking to blacken him. They are poisoned even to the pleasure of just praise. It is nowadays very rare."

"If you knew me, you would not accuse me of defaming you . . . that is to say, Captain Levin."

"Spare me ! spare me !" said the prisoner, "for loyalty and generosity there were never two men like this Levin de Knud, and to say anything to the contrary is to libel him and at the same time praise beyond measure this execrable human race !"

"I assure you," continued the governor, seeking to calm Schumacker's anger, "that I have never had a single perfidious intention against Levin de Knud."

"Do not say that. Even although he was thoughtless, all men are far from resembling him. They are false, ungrateful, envious, calumniators. Do you know that Levin de Knud gives more than half his revenue to the hospitals at Copenhagen ?"

"I did not know what you have just told me."

"That is it !" cried the old man with a triumphant air. "He hopes to be able to dishonor him safely, confident that I did not know of the good actions of poor Levin !"

"No, no!"

"And do you think that I do not know that he caused the regiment which the king intended for him, to be given to an officer who had wounded him, Levin de Knud, in a duel ; because, as he said, the other was older than he?"

"I will, however, believe this secret action."

"Tell me then, my lord governor of the Drontheimhus, is he any the less good on that account? Because Levin hides his virtues, is that a reason for denying them? Oh! men are all the same! Dare to confound them with noble Levin, he who, having been unable to save a captured soldier who had tried to assassinate him, gave a pension to the widow of his would-be murderer."

"Well, who would not have done as much?"

"He," Schumacker burst forth.

"Who? you! me! all men, my lord governor! Because you wear the brilliant uniform of a general and medals of honor on your breast, do you believe in your own merit? You are a general, and the unfortunate Levin will die a captain. It is true he was a madman, and never thought of his own advancement."

"If he has not thought for himself, the kindness of the king has thought for him."

"The kindness? Say the justice! If indeed one can speak of the justice of a king. Well! what insignificant reward have they given him?"

"His majesty has paid Levin de Knud well beyond the measure of his merit."

"Marvelous!" cried the minister, clapping his hands. "A loyal captain has perhaps, after thirty years of service, been made major, and this high favor displeases you, noble general? A Persian proverb is right in saying that the setting sun is jealous of the rising moon."

Schumacker was so irritated that the general with difficulty could get him to listen to him.

"If you will interrupt me—if you will prevent me explaining to you . . ."

"No, no!" continued the other, "I believed, my lord general, at first, that I noticed some features of resemblance between you and good Levin; but, alas! there is not a single one."

"But, listen to me . . ."

"Listen to you! While you tell me that Levin de Knud is insulted by such a miserable reward!"

"I swear to you that it is not . . ."

"You will return by-and-by, I expect, you other men, to tell me that he is, like all of you, a cheat, a hypocrite, wicked."

"Truly, no."

"How can I know? Perhaps he has betrayed a friend, persecuted a benefactor, as you have all done—or poisoned his father, or assassinated his mother?"

"You are in error . . . I am far from wishing . . ."

"Do you know what it was that induced the Vice-Chancellor Wind, likewise Scheel, Vinding and Justice Lasson, three of my judges, not to vote for sentence of death? And do you wish me, seriously, to slander him! Yes, it is thus that he has acted towards me, and yet I have always done him more ill than good; for I am as I seem to you, vile and wicked."

Noble Levin, during this strange interruption, experienced a strange emotion. An object, at the same time, of the most abusive insults and the most sincere praise, he no more knew how to receive such rude compliments than to accept such open flattery. He was shocked and moved. One moment he felt like rushing away, in another like thanking Schumacker. Present and unknown, he enjoyed seeing the savage Schumacker defending him, an absent friend; only, he would have been glad if his advocate had put a little less bitterness and tardiness in his panegyric. But, at the bottom of his soul, the furious eulogies



given to Captain Levin moved him more than the insults addressed to the governor of Drontheim wounded him. Bending his kindly glance on the disgraced favorite he allowed him to exhaust his indignation and his gratitude. He at last, after a long declamation against human ingratitude, fell exhausted in the arm-chair, into the arms of trembling Ethel, repeating in a sorrowful voice : " Oh ! men, what have I done to you that you judge me ? "

The general had not yet been able to broach the important subject which had brought him to Munckholm. All his dislike to torment the captive by questioning came back to him ; his pity and tenderness together were two strong enough reasons : the agitated state into which Schumacker had fallen left no hope that he would be able to answer in a satisfactory manner ; and besides, considering the matter on its face, it did not seem to him that such a man could be a conspirator. Nevertheless, how could he leave Drontheim without having questioned Schumacker ? This annoying duty in his position of governor once more vanquished his hesitation, and he commenced thus, in the mildest possible tone of voice :

" Calm your agitation a little, Count Schumacker. " It was by a happy inspiration that

the good governor had found this qualification, since he was able to satisfy in his conscience the respect due to the sentence of degradation and his regard for the unhappy man, by uniting his title of nobility to his common name. He continued :

“It is a painful duty which has brought me here . . .”

“Before all,” interrupted the prisoner, “allow me, my lord governor, to speak to you of a thing which interests me much more than what your excellency can have to say to me. You assured me just now that they had recompensed this madman Levin for his services. I would very much like to know how.”

“His Majesty, my Lord Griffenfeld, raised Levin to the rank of general, and for more than twenty years this madman has lived peaceably, honored with this military dignity and the good-will of his king.”

Schumacker bowed his head.

“Yes, this madman Levin, who cared little whether he would ever be a captain, will die a general, and wise Schumacker, who expected to die a grand chancellor, lives a prisoner of State.”

Thus speaking, the captive covered his face with his hands, and long sighs escaped from his breast. Ethel, who did not understand

the conversation which saddened her father, at once sought to distract him.

"Father, look there, to the north, there is a bright light which I have noticed on other evenings."

Indeed, night, which had just fallen, showed a feeble light, which seemed to come from some distant mountain. But Schumacker's eye and mind did not, like Ethel's, constantly turn towards the north, so he did not reply.

The general alone was struck by the remark of the young girl. "It is, perhaps," said he to himself, "a fire burned by the revolutionists;" and this idea forcibly reminded him of the reason of his presence, and he addressed the prisoner:

"My Lord Griffenfeld, I am ashamed to annoy you, but you must submit . . ."

"I understand, my lord governor, it is not enough that I must pass my days in this donjon, to live banished and abandoned, to have nothing but my better thoughts of former grandeur and power, you must violate my solitude in order to gaze upon my sorrows and to jeer at my misfortunes. Since noble Levin de Knud, of whom many of your personal traits remind me, is a general as well as you, it would have pleased me very much if they had given him the post you occupy, for

he would not have come, I assure you, my lord governor, to torment an unfortunate man in his prison."

During this odd speech, the governor had been more than once on the point of revealing himself in order to make him cease. This indirect reproach of Schumacker took from him the power to do so. It accorded so well with his own sentiments that it filled him with a feeling of shame for himself. He, nevertheless, tried to respond to Schumacker's overwhelming supposition. Strange! Owing to the only difference in their characters, these two men had changed positions. The judge was, in a way, forced to justify himself before the accused.

"But," said the general, "if duty had forced him, no doubt Levin de Knud . . ."

"I doubt it, noble governor!" cried Schumacker; "you know yourself that he would have rejected, with all the generous indignation of his soul, any suggestion to act as spy and add to the tortures of an unhappy captive! Never, I know him better than you, under no circumstances would he have accepted the functions of the torturer. Meantime, my lord general, I listen. Do what you call your duty. What does your excellence wish of me?"

And the old minister fixed his gaze on the governor. All the latter's resolutions had

disappeared. His first repugnance had returned, and returned invincible.

“Fine grounds,” said he to himself, “for coming to torment an unhappy man on mere suspicion ! They may send some one else than me !”

The effect of these reflections was prompt ; he advanced towards the astonished Schumacker and shook his hand. Then leaving precipitately : “Count Schumacker,” said he, “always retain the same esteem for Levin de Knud.”















Ch. Country sc.



The little man, quick as lightning, plunged his dagger into the mountaineer, whose identity was now discovered, as he fell on the soldier's body.—Han of Iceland, Vol. II., 237.

HAN OF ICELAND



## XXV.

LION—[*Roaring*]. Oh—

DEMETRIUS.—Well roared, Lion.

*Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V.

SHAKESPEARE.

The traveler who nowadays explores the snow-covered mountains which surround Lake Smiasen like a white coverlet, do not find a single vestige of what the seventeenth century Norwegians called the ruin of Arbar. We will never be able to tell what sort of human structure, what kind of edifice, the ruin was, if we can give it that name. Coming out of the forest which surrounded the southern part of the lake, after having climbed the remains here and there of walls and the remains of the towers, one noticed an open arch which pierced the flank of the mountain. This opening, nowadays entirely filled up with earth, was the entrance to a sort of gallery cut in the living rock. This gallery, feebly lighted by conical vents, built in the vault at regular distances, ended in a sort of oblong oval hall half cut in the rock and half of Cyclopean



masonry. Around this hall one noticed, in deep niches, rudely carved figures of granite. Some of these mysterious effigies, fallen from their pedestals, lay pell-mell on the flags, with others shattered beyond recognition, covered with weeds and moss, across which glided lizards, spiders and all hideous insects which live in the earth and in ruins. Daylight never penetrated into this place except by a door opposite the mouth of the gallery. This door, viewed from a certain side, had an ogive form, but roughly done, without period and without date, and evidently arranged by the architect by chance. One might have called this door a window, since it opened upon an immense precipice ; and one could not understand where three or four steps, cut in the edge, outside and below this singular outlet, could lead.

This hall was on the inside, a sort of gigantic tourelle, which, from a distance, seen from the side of the precipice, seemed like one of the peaks of the mountain. This tourelle was isolated, and, as we have already said, no one knew to what edifice it had belonged. One could only see, above, on a plateau inaccessible to the most daring hunter, a mass which may be taken, on account of the distance, for a curved rock on the débris of a colossal arcade. This tourelle and fallen arcade were known to

the peasants under the name of the ruins of Arbar. They know no more of the origin of the name than of the origin of the mountains.

Seated upon a stone placed in the middle of this elliptical hall, was a little man, clothed in the skins of animals, whom we have already many times had occasion to meet in the course of this work. His back was turned to the light, which, at the most, was only a dim twilight in the sombre tourelle even while at midday.

He was leaning over some object, not distinguishable, but evidently a living body, by the slight perceptible motion and the feeble groans which issued from it. The little man now and again took long draughts of some warm liquid from a goblet formed of a human skull.

All at once he rose suddenly.

"Some one is in the gallery. Can the chancellor of two kingdoms have arrived?"

These words were followed by a burst of laughter, ending in a savage roar, which was suddenly taken up by a howl.

"Oh, oh!" said the denizen of the ruin of Arbar. "This is no man, but a wolf; an enemy, for all that."

Indeed, suddenly a fierce-eyed wolf appeared, and crept stealthily toward the man, who stood with folded arms watching him.

“Ah! so it is the old grizzly wolf, the oldest of the forests of Smiasen. Good day, wolf, how are you? There is a brightness about your eyes; you are famished, and the scent of a corpse attracts you. What an attraction you will soon be for hungry wolves! You are welcome, Smiasen Wolf; I have always longed to meet you; and you have arrived at such an age that people believe you will never die. They will not say that to-morrow.”

The animal sprang back with a fearful howl, and then bounded forward on to the little man.

He did not move a step. Quick as lightning with his right hand he seized the wolf, who had planted his claws on the man's shoulders: with the other he caught the animal by the throat, to protect his face from its gaping jaws, with such a grasp that the wolf howled with pain.

“Wolf of Smiasen,” said the man triumphantly, “you are tearing my jacket; but your skin will make a good substitute!”

He had just followed his shout of victory with some curious jargon, when the wolf gave a sudden jerk, which threw them both to the ground. The cries from the man were mingled with the howls of the beast.

Compelled by the fall to release the animal's throat, the little man soon felt his shoulder

pierced with its sharp teeth. Thus rolling over one another, the combatants struck against an enormous white mass lying in the darkest part of the room.

It consisted of a bear, who rose growling, thus awakened from his heavy slumbers.

When he could distinguish what was going forward, he made a furious bound—not on the man, but on to the wolf, who was gaining ground, and seizing him violently, he freed the adversary with the human face.

The latter, completely blood-stained, rose up. Far from showing gratitude for so great a service, the man treated the bear as a man does his dog when in disgrace—kicked him.

“Friend, who called you? Mind your own business!” said he, furiously gnashing his teeth.

“Be off,” added he, reddening.

The bear, who had been kicked by the man and bitten by the wolf, gave forth a plaintive moan, and retired, thus releasing the famished animal, who threw himself on to the man with renewed vigor.

While the struggle continued the bear remained quietly in his sleeping quarters, stroking down his white muzzle with his paws, and looking on the two enemies with the utmost indifference.

But the little man, when the wolf returned to the charge, seized him by the muzzle, and

then caught hold of his throat. The animal, both from rage and pain, made desperate struggles for release. He foamed at the mouth, and his eyes seemed ready to start from his head. Of the two adversaries, he whose bones were splintered by the sharpest of fangs, whose flesh was torn by fierce nails, belonged not to the man, but the wild beast; the savage expressions and the frightful howling came not from the wild beast, but from the man.

At last, weakened by the wolf's long resistance, Han made a final effort, and grasped him with both hands by the muzzle, till blood flowed from the nose and mouth; his eyes half-closed, and he fell at his conqueror's feet. Feeble movements and trembling showed that he was not yet entirely dead.

All at once a convulsive movement shook the dying animal, and life soon ceased to exist.

"So you are dead!" said the little man, kicking the body contemptuously. "Did you think to lengthen your days after meeting me? You won't follow scent in quest of prey again through the snow. The wolves and vultures will now have their turn, and take it out of you. What lost travelers about Smiasen you must have devoured during your long, murderous career! Now, there you lie dead, never again to feast on man—more is the pity!"

Using a sharp flint, he soon dismantled the wolf, and covered himself with the animal's warm and gory skin, turned inside out. His shoulders, torn by the wolf's fangs, were thus out of sight.

"I must," growled he, between his teeth, "clothe myself in the skin of beasts, for that of man is too thin to protect me from the cold."

Whilst thus meditating, he looked more hideous than his hideous trophy. The bear, weary of waiting, stealthily advanced toward the mass before mentioned and soon amid the gloom was heard the grinding of teeth, mingled with faint and plaintive moans.

"Friend!" cried the man threateningly. "Ah, you wretched Friend! come here, I tell you!"

And picking up a large stone he threw it at the monster's head, who, though stunned by the blow, rose up reluctantly from the feast, smacking his lips, and ambled toward his master's feet. With a pleading expression he raised his head mutely asking pardon for his indiscretion.

Then both monsters could now be heard—for the denizen of the ruin of Arbar had well earned the title. The man's voice denoted power and anger; the bear's growl submission and pleading.

“Hold!” said the man, pointing with his crooked fingers towards the wolf, “there is your prey, leave me mine.”

The bear, after having sniffed the body of the wolf, shook his head with a dissatisfied air and turned towards the man who seemed to be his master.

“I understand you. Dead prey is not to your liking; you prefer the other, as it still has life. You are refined in your tastes! Friend, like man, you seek the living in order to destroy them. You delight in causing suffering; there we have a fellow feeling, for I am not a man, Friend. I am above that depraved race—I am a savage beast like yourself. Companion Friend, I wish you could speak, just to say if your bearish feelings equal my delight at devouring a man. Yet I would rather not hear you, for the sound might remind me of the human voice. Growl at my feet! The roar which terrifies the mountain deer to me is a friendly voice, for it forewarns me that an enemy is nigh. Friend, raise up your head; lick my hand with the tongue that has so often partaken of human blood! Your teeth are white like mine—no fault of yours, for we have done our best to change them red; but it seems that blood cleanses blood. I have often noticed young girls of Kole or Oëlmœe bathing their feet in

the torrents and singing sweetly the while. In preference to their melodious voices and satin-like faces, I delight in your shaggy muzzle and hoarse cries; they strike terror to a man."

While thus musing, he allowed the monster to caress his hand, and show him all the affection a spaniel displays towards his mistress.

What was still more strange was the rapt attention with which the animal listened to his master's words, more particularly to odd monosyllables, which he at once acknowledged by some curious sound.

"Men say I shun them," continued the little man. "Why, they shun me! They from fear, and I from hatred. Yet, Friend, you know I am glad to meet a man when I feel hungry or thirsty."

Suddenly a red light appeared, increasing gradually and giving a faint color to the old damp walls of the gallery.

"Why, here comes one now! Well, speak of hell and the devil shows his horns. Hello! Friend," added he, turning toward the bear; "hello, get up! Come, Friend! I must reward your obedience by satisfying your appetite."

Turning with his hatchet to the mass on the ground, he soon crunched through the bones;



but the sound this time was not blended with either sighs or groans.

“So it seems there are but two living creatures here now,” muttered the man. “There, Friend, my Friend, enjoy your feast.”

The animal rose immediately.

He threw aside the portion detached from the object at his feet. The bear seized his prey so eagerly, that the most sharp-sighted could hardly have seen if the morsel were a human arm, covered with green, such as the uniform worn by Munckholm musketeers.

“See! some one approaches!” His gaze fixed on the light as it gradually increased. “Friend, I must be alone.”

The monster obeyed; taking with him his disgusting prey, he retreated through the door and down the steps, with a howl of satisfaction.

At the same time a man of medium height came forward, bearing a long brown cloak, and carrying a dark lantern, with the bull’s-eye turned full on the little man.

He, still seated on the stone, with his arms crossed, cried out :

“You are unwelcome!—you who come here led by an idea, and not from instinct.”

The stranger made no reply, but looked at him attentively.

"Stare on," said he, raising his head. "Why, in an hour's time you won't have enough voice left even to boast you have seen me."

The new-comer continued casting the light on the little man, evidently more surprised than alarmed.

"Well, what astonishes you?" said he, with a hoarse laugh. "I have arms and legs as well as you, only mine will never be food for wild cats and crows."

"Listen," said the stranger, sinking his voice, as though assured and as though he only feared being overheard.

"Listen, I am not come as an enemy, but as a friend."

The other interrupted him.

"Why then have you not laid aside your human form?"

"I wish to serve you, if you are he whom I search."

"That means, you want me to serve you. Man, you are wasting time. I am only of use to those who are weary of life."

"Your speech denotes the man I am seeking," replied the stranger, "but your height—Han of Iceland is a giant; you cannot therefore be he."

"This is the first time any one has doubted it to my face."

“What! then you are the person,” added the stranger, approaching; “but Han of Iceland is of colossal stature.”

“Add my height to my fame, and you will see me taller than Hecla.”

“Indeed! answer me, I pray you, are you really Han, native of Klipstadur, in Iceland?”

“It is not with words that I will answer that question,” retorted the little man. Rising, he accompanied the remark with such a look that the stranger drew back.

“Confine yourself, I pray, to looks only,” he answered in an almost supplicant voice, and with a glance toward the end of the gallery, as though regretting his rash venture. “Your interests alone bring me here.”

At first, on arrival, the new-comer had been able to retain his coolness, but now, when the host of Arbar stood before him, with tiger-like expression and blood-stained appearance, his immense hands armed with huge nails, the stranger shuddered in the same way a traveler would do on being bitten by a viper, when he thought to handle an eel.

“My interests!” replied the monster. “Have you come to inform me that a spring is to be poisoned, or a village burnt down, or a Munckholm musketeer to be strangled?”

"Perhaps, listen. The Norway miners are in a revolt. You know what disasters a revolt entails."

"Yes. Murder! violence! sacrilege! fire! pillage!"

"I offer you all that."

The little man began to laugh.

"I have no need of offers of what I can take myself."

The hoarse laugh which followed these words made the stranger tremble. He continued, however:

"In the name of the miners I offer you the command of the insurrection."

The little man was silent for a moment, then, with an expression of deep malice, he said:

"Is it really in their name that you make the offer?"

This question somewhat disconcerted the new-comer, but feeling secure in his unknown identity, he soon recovered himself.

"Why are the miners in revolt?" he was asked.

"To free themselves from the royal tax."

"Only for that?" retorted the other in the same mock tone.

"They wish also to set the prisoner at Munckholm at liberty."

"Is this the sole reason for the movement?" answered he, in such a tone as to disconcert the stranger.

"I know of no other," stammered the latter.

"Ah! so you know of no other?"

These words were pronounced in the same ironical tone. To put an end to these embarrassing remarks the stranger drew forth a heavy purse, which he threw at the monster's feet, saying:

"There is your pay as commander."

The little man kicked away the purse.

"I won't have it. Do you think I should wait for your permission to take either your blood or your gold?"

The stranger made a gesture of surprise and fear.

"The royal miners sent me with that as a present to you."

"I don't want it, I tell you; gold is of no use to me. Men sell their souls, but they will not sell their lives; we are therefore compelled to take them."

"I can then tell the miners that the formidable Han of Iceland agrees to accept the command?"

"I do not accept it."

This answer, said shortly, made a disagreeable impression on the pretended envoy of the miners.

"What?" said he.

"No!" repeated the other.

"You refuse to take part in an expedition which promises so many advantages to you?"

"I can plunder farms and hamlets, massacre peasants or soldiers, alone."

"Yes, but in joining the miners you are assured of impunity."

"And is it also in the name of the miners that you promise impunity?" asked the other, laughing.

"I will not disguise from you," replied the stranger, mysteriously, "that it is in the name of a powerful personage who is interested in the rebellion."

"And this mighty person himself, is he quite sure he will not be hanged?"

"If you knew to whom I allude, your doubts would cease."

"Ah; well, then, who is it?"

"That I cannot tell you."

The little man advanced, and striking the stranger on the shoulder, exclaimed, with the same ironical laugh:

"Shall I tell you the name?"

The stranger in the cloak drew back, both from fear and disgust, as he was as little prepared for the direct question as the savage familiarity of the monster.

“There, I am having a game with you,” continued the latter. “I know that this mighty person is the Grand Chancellor of Denmark and Norway, and that the grand chancellor is yourself.”

This was indeed the case. When he reached the ruin of Arbar, towards which we left him journeying with Musdœmon, he had wished to try and seduce the brigand himself, to whom he was far from suspecting himself known. Count d’Ahlefeld was never, in spite of all his finesse and power, able to discover by what means Han of Iceland was so well informed. Was it by Musdœmon’s treachery? It was Musdœmon, it is true, who had suggested the idea of his going in person to the brigand; but what benefit would his perfidy be to him? Had the brigand secured from one of his victims some papers relative to the grand chancellor’s projects? But Frederick d’Ahlefeld, with Musdœmon, was the sole living being who knew of his father’s plans, and, frivolous as he was, he was not so foolish as to reveal such a secret. Besides, he was with the garrison at Munckholm, at least so the grand chancellor thought. Those who read the balance of this chapter will see, without being any better informed than Count d’Ahlefeld, what grounds of probability there was in this last hypothesis.

One of Count d'Ahlefeld's strongest qualities was his presence of mind. When he heard himself so fiercely named by the little man, he could make no response except a cry of surprise; but in a twinkling of an eye his pale and haughty features changed from an expression of fear and astonishment to one of calm assurance.

"Yes, I wish to be frank with you. I am the chancellor. Now be equally frank with me."

A burst of laughter from the other interrupted him.

"Did I require much begging, either to tell you my name or your own?"

"Tell me as frankly how you knew who I was?"

"Have you heard that Han of Iceland can see through mountains?"

The count still persisted.

"In me you have a friend."

"Give me your hand, Count d'Ahlefeld," said the little man roughly. Then looking the minister in the face, he cried: "If our two souls were to take flight at this moment, satan would be puzzled as to which of us is the monster."

The haughty noble bit his lips; but, placed between his fears of the brigand and the necessity of making him his tool, he showed no signs of displeasure.



“Don’t play with your own interests; accept the command of the insurgents, and trust to my gratitude.”

“Chancellor of Norway, you reckon on the success of your enterprise as an old woman does on the dress she is about weaving from stolen flax, little dreaming the cat has entangled the thread in its claws.”

“Once more, reflect before you reject my offer.”

“Once more I—the brigand—I tell you, grand chancellor of two kingdoms, No.”

“I expected another answer, judging from the great service you have already rendered me.”

“What service?” asked the brigand.

“Did you not murder Captain Dispolsen?” answered the chancellor.

“That may be, Count d’Ahlefeld; I do not know him. Who is the man to whom you are alluding?”

“What! do you mean to say that the iron casket in his charge has not fallen into your hands?”

This question evidently recalled something to the brigand’s mind.

“I certainly do remember seeing this man and his iron casket. It was at the Sands of Urchtal.”

“If you could let me have that casket, my gratitude shall know no bounds. Tell me.

What has become of it? For it is still in your power."

The noble minister insisted so urgently in his demand that the brigand seemed astonished.

"This iron box is then of the highest importance to your grace, Chancellor of Norway?"

"Yes."

"What will be my reward if I tell you where to find it?"

"All that you can desire, my dear Han of Iceland."

"Well, then, I won't tell you."

"Come, you are joking. Only think of the service you will render me."

"That is precisely what I am considering."

"You shall have an immense fortune, and I will ask the king for your pardon."

"Ask rather for your own," said the brigand. "Now listen, Grand Chancellor of Denmark and Norway. Tigers do not attack hyenas, so you shall leave here alive, for you are a villain, whose sole thought in life is to plan for man's misery, thus adding fresh crime to yourself. Go, but never attempt to return, for my hatred spares no one, not even criminals. Now don't flatter yourself I killed the captain on your account; why, his uniform condemned him. Nor was it to render you

a service that I killed this other wretch, I assure you."

Thus speaking, he drew the count by the arm toward the body lying in the shadow. The light from the dark lantern fell full on the object. It was the mangled corpse of a man clothed in the uniform of an officer of the Munckholm musketeers. The chancellor shudderingly advanced, and beheld a blood-stained face, with its parted lips all blue, the eyes upturned, from which all light had fled. The count gave a piercing cry.

"Heaven! Frederick! my son!"

There is no doubt that in the most hardened sinner there is some hidden feeling, lost even to themselves amid a life of passion and vice—a mysterious witness proving a future avenger. It bides its time, remaining in the heart until the day it shows that crime shall know what anguish means. No ordinary misfortune can affect the wicked and selfish. Let some deep grief unexpectedly arise, then it eats into their very soul, and the affection, quite unknown even to themselves, will assert itself in all its depths and pain, stronger from its previous state of insensibility; but the sting of sorrow must probe the heart deeply. Nature has its rights, and the wretched creature in one short moment experiences all the agony which he has scoffed at for years. Tortured by

conflicting emotions, in his despair he sees but hell in itself.

Without knowing it Count d'Ahlefeld loved his son. We say his son, because he was ignorant of the adultery of his wife. Frederick, direct heir to his name, had this title in his eyes. Believing him to be at Munckholm, he little thought to find him in the ruins of Arbar, there lying dead before his eyes, bathed in blood. The love for his son rose in full force with the certainty that he was lost beyond recall. Overcome by the fearful shock, he wrung his hands in anguish, crying :

“My son ! my son !”

The brigand laughed ; it was a horrible thing to hear the sound of laughter, mingled with the father's moans over the dead body of his son.

“By my ancestor, Ingulphus, you may cry out, Count d'Ahlefeld ; you will never awake him.”

Suddenly his fearful countenance changed, and he added, solemnly :

“Cry over your son ; I have avenged mine.”

He was interrupted by sounds of footsteps in the gallery. Four men, with drawn swords, rushed forward, followed by a short man in a brown cloak like the chancellor's, bearing a torch in one hand and a sword in the other.

“My lord!” cried he, “we heard your cry, and hastened to the rescue.”

The reader has doubtless recognized Musdœmon and the four armed servants who composed the count’s suite.

The new-comers, by the light from the torch, beheld with horror the frightful spectacle. On one side lay the remains of the wolf, wet with gore, and on the other the disfigured corpse of the young officer. In the midst the father with haggard face crying in his despair, and near to him the dreadful brigand’s hideous countenance boldly confronting them.

On seeing this unexpected reinforcement, the idea of vengeance occurred to the count, and his despair turned to rage.

“Death to this brigand!” cried he, drawing his sword. “He has murdered my son! Death! death!”

“He has murdered Lord Frederick!” said Musdœmon, and the torch which he carried showed not the least change in his features.

“Death! death!” repeated the count furiously.

And the six men rushed on to the brigand, who, surprised at the sudden attack, retreated to the precipice, giving a wild roar, far more of rage than fear.

Six swords were against him, but his fierce glance was more menacing than that of any two of his assailants. Compelled to keep on the defensive, he wielded his stone hatchet with such rapidity that it formed a complete buckler, against which the swords were vain. Weakened by his late encounter with the wolf, he was losing ground, and he soon found himself on the brink of the abyss.

“Courage, my friends!” cried the count; “let us dash the monster over the precipice.”

“Before I fall, the planets will fall,” replied the brigand.

On seeing the little man take a step backward down the stone flight, his adversaries followed with renewed ardor.

“Good, press forward!” urged the chancellor. “He must fall; one more effort. Ah! wretch, you have committed your last crime! courage, my friends!”

The brigand still protected himself with the hatchet in his right hand, while with the other he raised the horn from his belt, and blew several prolonged blasts. The answering call at once came—a loud roar was soon heard proceeding from the abyss.

Just as the count and his followers were flattering themselves upon their success in having made the little man take another step

downward, the enormous head of a white bear appeared behind him. The assailants drew back in surprise and fear.

The bear mounted the steps and confronted the foes with his open blood-stained mouth.

“Thanks, my brave Friend,” exclaimed the brigand.

And, profiting by his adversaries’ discomfiture he vaulted on to the bear’s back. The animal descended with his threatening face turned towards his master’s enemies.

Soon, recovered from their surprise they could see the bear effecting his escape with his burden; by grasping trunks of trees and projecting rocks, they endeavored to raise a block of granite, but before they could hurl it, the brigand and his strange beast had vanished into a cavern.

## XXVI.

No, no, laugh no more. Look you, what seems so pleasant also has its serious side, a very serious one, and so in everything. Believe me, this word chance is blasphemy; nothing under the sun happens by chance; and so in this you see the end providence has in view.

LESSING—*Emilia Galotti.*

Yes, most profound reasoning is often shown in what men call chance. In these events, what seems a mysterious hand shapes, in a way, their course and object. One may rail against the caprices of fortune, or the strangeness of things, and suddenly out of chaos there comes astounding light, or some bright rays; and human knowledge bows before the high lessons of destiny.

If, for example, when Frederick d'Ahlefeld, in a sumptuous salon at Copenhagen, displayed, before the eyes of the ladies, the magnificence of his apparel, the foppishness of his rank and the presumption of his speech, some man, warned about future events, came and troubled



the frivolity of his thoughts by grave prophecies; if he had told him that some day his brilliant uniform, which was his pride, would be the cause of his death; that a monster with a human face would drink his blood as he, careless voluptuary, drank the wines of France and Bohemia; that his hair, for which he had not enough essences and perfumes, would sweep the dust in a cave of wild beasts; that his arm, which he offered with so much grace as support to the beautiful ladies of Charlottenburg, would be thrown like a half-picked roebuck bone, to a bear; how would Frederick have replied to these dismal prophecies? By a burst of laughter and a jest; and, what would have been more dreadful, all human reasoning would have agreed with the madman.

Let us examine this destiny still further. Is it not a strange mystery to see the crime of the count and countess of d'Ahlefeld return to them as a punishment? They had hatched a plot against the daughter of a captive; this unfortunate girl had by chance a protector who considered it necessary to send away their son, entrusted by them to execute this abominable design. This son, their only hope, was sent far from the scene of his seduction; and, no sooner had he arrived at his new station than another chance avenger killed him.

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Thus, hoping to lead a young innocent girl whom they hated into dishonor, drove their cherished yet guilty son into his tomb. It was by their fault that these wretched beings became miserable.

## XXVII.

Ah ! Here is our beautiful countess !—Pardon, madame, if I am unable to-day to take advantage of your visit. I am very busy. Another time, dear countess, another time ; but, to-day, I will not keep you long.

*Le Prince à Orsina.*

The day after his visit to Munckholm the Governor of Drontheim called early for his traveling carriage, hoping to leave before the Countess d'Ahlefeld was up, but, as we have already said, the sleep of the countess was broken.

The general had just signed the last instructions for the bishop, who was to replace him as governor in the *interim*. He arose, put on his fur redingote, and was on the point of starting, when the noble lady was announced.

This annoyance disconcerted the old soldier, accustomed to laugh at the fire of a hundred cannon, but who could not stand a woman's artifices. He made his adieus, hoping to escape further questioning. The wicked countess leaned forward with an artful expression of

countenance, meaning to impress him as purely confidential.

"Well, noble general, what did he say to you?"

"Who?—Poël? He said the carriage was ready."

"I am speaking of the Munckholm prisoner, general."

"Ah!"

"Did he reply in a satisfactory manner?"

"But—yes—really, my lady countess," said the general, whom we may be assured was now embarrassed.

"Have you any proof of his complicity with the miners?"

An exclamation escaped from Levin.

"Noble lady, he is innocent!"

He suddenly stopped, for he had just spoken according to his heart's dictates, and not according to his judgment.

"He is innocent!" repeated the countess, in consternation, though still incredulous. She feared Schumacker had satisfied the general, and his guilt proven was all important to the interest of the grand chancellor.

The governor had had time to reflect, and his hesitating reply was reassuring to the countess.

"Innocent—yes—if you wish."

"If I wish, my lord general!"

And the wicked woman burst into laughter.

This laughter wounded the governor.

"Noble countess," said he, "with all due deference, I must tell you that the details of my interview with the ex-grand chancellor are for the viceroy's ears alone."

With a profound bow he retired, and descended into the court where his carriage was waiting.

"Yes, go," repeated the countess to herself, once within her own apartment, "you knight-errant, the protector of our enemies. May your departure be the signal of my Frederick's return. Fancy sending the handsomest cavalier in Copenhagen to those horrible mountains! Happily there will be no difficulty now in having him recalled."

At this thought she addressed her favorite attendant:

"My dear Lisbeth, order from Berghen a couple of dozen small combs now worn by beaux in the hair, and the famous Scudéry's newest novel. My dear Frederick's monkey must have a rose-water bath every morning."

"What! my gracious mistress," asked Lisbeth, "can my Lord Frederick then return?"

"Yes, indeed. I must fulfil his wishes; he will then be pleased to see me. Besides, I want to surprise him."

Poor mother!

## XXVIII.

Bernard followed the banks of the Arlança. He seemed like a lion which had left its lair, seeking the huntsmen and determined to conquer or die.

So he has gone, this valiant and determined Spaniard?

With a rapid step, a great spear in hand, in which he placed great hopes, Bernard explored the ruins of Arlança.

*Spanish Romance.*

Orderer, wearied with seeking his poor guide, Benignus Spiagudry, left the tower whence he had perceived Munckholm beacon. The ruins but echoed his calls. Surprised, but in no way alarmed, at the man's disappearance, attributing it to fright he therefore blamed himself for leaving him, and decided to pass the night on the rocks of Oëlmœ, to give his guide the time to return. After some slight refreshment, he wrapped his cloak around him, and lay down near the few remaining embers. Pressing Ethel's hair to his lips, he soon fell asleep. Even amid great anxiety sleep comes to a clear conscience.

At sunrise Ordener resumed his search, but he only found Spiagudry's cloak and wallet in the tower, showing evidently marks of a hasty retreat. Despairing to find him on the rock, he left, in order to keep his appointment with Han of Iceland at Walderhog on the morrow.

In the early chapters we have learned that Ordener was accustomed to a wandering and adventurous life, and as he was well acquainted with Northern Norway, he wanted no guide to the brigand's retreat. He went forth on his solitary journey, with no Benignus Spiagudry to give him information concerning the quartz in the mountains, or the various traditions of the country.

He traveled for a whole day across the mountains, which running from north to south of Norway down to the sea, give to the coast a succession of promontories and gulfs. Inland mountains and valleys follow one upon another to such an extent that Norway is compared to the backbone of a fish.

It was no easy thing to travel in that country. Sometimes it was necessary to follow the stony bed of a dried-up torrent, sometimes to cross on a shaky bridge made of a trunk of a tree when the roads themselves had been chosen as beds by the raging torrents.

However, Ordener traveled for hours without seeing any evidences of the presence of

man, beyond occasionally seeing the sails of a wind-mill on the top of a hill, or hearing the noise of a distant forge, from which the smoke rose and hung in the air like a black canopy.

Here and there he met a peasant mounted on a little gray horse, head down, and only a little less savage than its master, or fur merchant seated in his sled drawn by two rein-deers, behind which was attached a long rope, with many knots, which, bounding over the stones of the road, was intended to frighten the wolves.

When Ordener asked the merchant the road to the cavern of Walderhog: "Keep to the northeast you will find the village of Hervalyn, cross the ravine of Dodlysax, and to-night you may reach Surb, which is only two miles from Walderhog." Thus carelessly replied the roving merchant, knowing only the names and positions of the places which his business compelled him to explore.

If Ordener addressed the same question to a peasant, he, steeped in the traditions and fireside tales of the country, would shake his head repeatedly and stop his gray nag saying: "Walderhog! the cavern of Walderhog! There even stones sing and bones dance, and the demon of Iceland lives there. Is it really to the cavern of Walderhog that your courtesy wishes to go?"



"Yes, certainly," answered Ordener.

"Then your courtesy must have lost your mother, or your farm has burnt down, or your neighbor has stolen your fat pig?"

"No, really," replied the young man.

"Then your courtesy has been bewitched?"

"My good man, I ask the way to Walderhog."

"I am giving you the answer, my lord. Farewell, then. Keep to the north. I know well enough how you can get there, but I am very doubtful how you will return."

And the peasant drove away, making the sign of the cross.

The dismal monotony and the difficulties of the road were increased by a fine penetrating rain which began about the middle of the day. No birds dared to breast the wind, and Ordener, frozen in spite of his cloak, saw above his head only a goshawk, gerfalcon or kingfisher, which, alarmed at the noise of his approach, rose suddenly from the reeds of a pond with a fish in its claws.

It was night, when the young traveler, after having traversed the forest of aspen and beech trees close to the ravine of Dodlysax, arrived at the hamlet of Surb in which Spiagudry, as the reader may remember, wished to make his headquarters. From the smell of tar and charcoal smoke Ordener knew that he was

approaching a settlement of fishermen. He advanced towards the first hut which he could distinguish in the dusk. The low narrow entrance was closed, according to the Norwegian custom, by a large transparent fish skin, reddened by the light of a fire.

He knocked on the wood frame of the door, crying:

“It is a traveler.”

“Come in, come in,” was the reply from within.

At the same moment an officious hand raised the fish skin, and Ordener entered the conical habitations used by the fishermen of the Norwegian coast. It was a sort of round tent of wood and earth, in the middle of which burned a fire in which the purple flame of heat mingled with the white light of the fir tree. Near the fire the fisherman, his wife and two children, dressed in rags, were seated before a table covered with wooden plates and earthen vessels. On the opposite side, among the nets and oars, were two reindeers sleeping on a bed of leaves and skins, a continuation of which seemed intended to receive the hosts of the house and any guests Heaven might be pleased to send them. One could not all at once distinguish this interior arrangement of the hut for heavy stinging smoke, which with difficulty escaped through

an opening in the top of the cone, wrapped all objects in a thick moving cloud.

Orderer had hardly crossed the threshold, when the fisherman and his wife rose and saluted him with an air of kindness and welcome. Norwegian peasants like travelers, as much perhaps from the feeling of curiosity, so strong in them, as from their natural love of hospitality.

"My lord," said the fisherman, "you must be hungry and cold, here is a fire to dry your cloak and excellent rye bread to appease your appetite. Your courtesy may afterwards deign to tell us who you are, whence you come, where you are going, and what sort of tales the old women tell in your country."

"Yes, my lord," added the woman, "and you may add to this excellent rye bread, as my lord and husband says, a piece of delicious salt stock-fish, seasoned with whale-oil. Sit down, my lord stranger."

"And if your courtesy does not like the cheer of Saint Usulph," continued the man, "if he will have patience for a minute, I promise him he will eat a quarter of venison or at the least a wing of a royal pheasant. We will await the return of the finest hunter there is in the three provinces. Is it not true, my good Maase?"

Maase, the name which the fisherman gave to his wife, is a Norwegian word which means sea-gull. The woman did not seem annoyed, either because it was her real name or a nickname of tenderness.

"The best hunter! I think so, certainly," she responded with emphasis. "He is my brother, the famous Kennybol! May God favor his chase! He has come to spend several days with us, and you may be able, my lord stranger, to drink with him several draughts of good beer from the same cup. He is a traveler like you."

"Many thanks, my kind hostess," said Ordener smiling; "but I will be forced to content myself with your appetizing stock-fish and a piece of rye bread. I will not have the leisure to await your brother, the famous hunter. I must depart immediately."

The good Maase, at the same time annoyed at the prompt departure of the stranger, and flattered by the praises of her stock-fish and her brother, cried:

"You are very good, my lord. But why are you going to leave us so soon?"

"I must."

"You are going to venture in the mountains at this hour and in such weather?"

"It is on important business."

These replies of the young man aroused the native curiosity of his hosts as much as it excited their astonishment.

The fisherman rose and said :

“You are in the house of Christopher Buldus Braall, fisherman, of the hamlet of Surb.”

The woman added :

“Maase Kennybol is his wife and servant.”

When Norwegian peasants wish to politely ask a stranger his name, their custom is to tell him theirs.

Ordener answered :

“And I, I am a traveler who is neither sure of the name he bears, nor the road which he follows.”

This singular response seemed not to satisfy fisherman Braall.

“By the crown of Gorman the Old,” said he, “I thought that in Norway there was only one man who was not sure of his name. That man is the noble Baron of Thorwick, who will soon be called, they tell me, Count of Danneskiold, on account of his glorious marriage with the daughter of the chancellor. That at least, my good Maase, is the latest news which I have heard from Drontheim. I congratulate you, my lord stranger, on this similarity to the son of the viceroy, the great Count Guldenlew.”

“Since your courtesy,” added the woman, whose face was flushed with curiosity, “seems

unable to tell us anything about himself, perhaps he can give us some news of what is going on just now; for instance, about this famous marriage of which my lord and husband has just received news?"

"Yes," continued the other with an important air, "is there anything later? Before a month, the son of the viceroy will marry the daughter of the grand chancellor."

"I doubt it," said Ordener.

"You doubt it, my lord! I myself can assure you that the thing is certain. I have it from a good source. He who told me had it from my Lord Poël, the favorite valet of the noble Baron of Thorwick, that is to say the noble Count of Danneskiöld. Has any storm troubled the waters within a week? Will this great union be broken?"

"I believe so," answered the young man smiling.

"If it is so, my lord, I was wrong. No need to light the fire to fry the fish before the net has caught it. But is this rupture certain? From whom did you learn the news?"

"From no one," said Ordener, "I myself arranged all that in my head."

At these naïve words the fisherman could not forbear violating Norwegian courtesy by a long burst of laughter.

“A thousand pardons, my lord. But it is easily seen that you are indeed a traveler, and without doubt a stranger. Do you really believe that events follow your caprices, and that the weather will cloud over or clear according to your wish?”

Here, the fisherman, learned in national affairs, like all Norwegian peasants, began to explain to Ordener reasons why this marriage must occur, it was necessary for the interests of the d'Ahlefeld family; the viceroy could not refuse the king, who desired it, and besides it was said that genuine passion united the future bride and groom. In short, fisherman Braall no more doubted that this alliance would take place than that he, next day, would kill the cursed sea-dog which infested the pond of Master-Bick.

Ordener felt little disposed to maintain a political conversation with such a rude statesman, when the arrival of a new personage allowed him to escape the annoyance.

“’Tis he, it is my brother!” cried old Maase. And it needed nothing less than the arrival of a brother to disturb the contemplative admiration with which she listened to the lengthy discourse of her husband. The latter, whilst the children threw themselves noisily on their uncle’s neck, gravely held out his hand.

“Make yourself welcome, my brother.”

Then, turning towards Ordener :

"My lord, this is our brother, the renowned hunter Kennybol, of the Kole Mountains."

"I salute you heartily," said the mountaineer, doffing his bearskin cap. "Brother, I have as bad hunting on your shores, as you no doubt would have bad fishing in our mountains. I believe I would sooner fill my shooting-pouch hunting elves and goblins in the hazy mountains of Queen Mab. Sister Maase, you are the first sea-gull to which I have been able to say good-day up to now. Hold, friends, may God keep you in peace ! It was for this miserable woodcock that the best hunter in the Drontheimhus has scoured the glades all this time and in this weather."

Thus speaking, he drew a white wood-hen from his game bag and threw it on the table, vowing that this thin beast was not worthy of a musket-shot. "But," added he under his breath, "faithful musket of Kennybol, you will soon hunt bigger game. If you no longer have chamois or antelope to slaughter, you will have green jackets and red (justaucorps) to pierce."

These half-heard words excited Maase's curiosity.

"Eh !" asked she, "what did you say then, my good brother ?"

"I said there was always a goblin dancing on women's tongues."



"You are right, brother Kennybol," cried the fisherman. "These daughters of Eve are all as curious as their mothers. Did you not speak of green jackets?"

"Brøther Braall," replied the hunter in a tone of ill-humor, "I only confide my secrets to my musket, because I am sure it will not repeat them."

"They talk in the village of a revolt of the miners," intrepidly continued the fisherman. "Brother, do you know anything about it?"

The mountaineer put on his cap and drawing it down over his eyes threw a sidelong glance at the stranger; then he bent towards the fisherman, and said in a curt deep voice: "Silence!"

The other shook his head several times.

"Brother Kennybol, the fish is silent in vain, for he none the less falls into the bow-net."

Then there was a moment of silence. The brothers watched each other with an expressive air; the children plucked the feathers from the wood-hen on the table; the good wife heard that no one was speaking; and Ordener looked on.

"If you have poor cheer to-day," said the hunter suddenly, openly seeking to change the conversation, "it will not be so bad to-morrow. Brother Braall, you may fish for the

king of fishes, I promise you bear's grease to season it."

"Bear's grease!" cried Maase. "Have you seen a bear hereabouts? Patrick, Regner, my children, I forbid you to go out of the cabin. A bear!"

"Calm yourself, sister, you need have no fear of it to-morrow. Yes, it was indeed a bear that I saw about two miles from Surb; a white bear. It seemed to be carrying a man, or an animal rather. But no, it could not have been a goatherd that he was carrying off, for goatherds clothe themselves in animal skins. However, distance did not permit me to distinguish. What astonished me was that he carried his prey on his back and not between his teeth."

"Truly, brother?"

"Yes, and the animal must have been dead for it made no movement to defend itself."

"But," shrewdly asked the fisherman, "if it was dead, how did it keep itself on the bear's back?"

"That is just what I have not been able to understand. However, it will have made the bear's last meal. Passing through the village I just notified six good companions; and to-morrow, sister Maase, I will bring to you the finest white fur I have ever seen roam on the snows of a mountain."

"Take care, brother," said the woman, "you have indeed seen a remarkable thing. This bear is perhaps the devil."

"Are you crazy?" laughingly interrupted the mountaineer; "the devil change himself into a bear! Into a cat or a monkey, well enough, that has been seen, but into a bear! Ah! By Saint Eldon the Exorciser, you would move the pity of a child or an old woman with your superstitions!"

The poor woman hung her head.

"Brother, you were my lord before my revered husband cast eyes on me, act as your guardian angel inspires you to act."

"But," the fisherman asked the mountaineer, "in what direction did you meet this bear?"

"On the road from Smiasen to Walderhog."

"Walderhog!" said the woman, making the sign of the cross.

"Walderhog!" repeated Ordener.

"But, my brother," continued the fisherman, "it is not thou, I hope, who went towards this grotto of Walderhog?"

"Me! God forbid! It was the bear."

"Will you go to seek it there to-morrow?" interrupted Maase in terror.

"No, indeed; do you believe, my friends, that even a bear would choose as a retreat a cavern where . . . ?"

He stopped, and all three made the sign of the cross.

"You are right," answered the fisherman, "there is an instinct which keeps beasts from such things as that."

"My good hosts," said Ordener, "what is there so frightful about this grotto of Walderhog?"

They all three regarded him with stupid astonishment, as though they could not understand such a question.

"Is it there that the tomb of King Walder is?" added the young man.

"Yes," answered the woman, "a tomb of stone that sings."

"There is no doubt about it," said the fisherman.

"No," continued she, "and at night one can hear the bones of trespassers dancing."

All were silent, as though they did not dare to go on.

"Well," asked Ordener, "is there anything else supernatural?"

"Young man," said the mountaineer, gravely, "there is no need to speak so lightly when you see such an old gray wolf as I shudder."

The young man answered with a gentle smile:

"I would like very much to know all the marvelous things which happen in this grotto of Walderhog ; I am just on my way there."

These words petrified his three hearers with terror.

"To Walderhog ! Heavens ! You are going to Walderhog?"

"He said it," answered the fisherman, "as one says : I am going to Lœvig to sell my cod-fish ! or to Ralph's clearing to fish for herring ! To Walderhog, great God !"

"Unhappy young man !" cried the woman, "you must have been born without a guardian angel. Is no saint in heaven your patron ? Alas ! It is too true since you do not even know your own name."

"And what object," interrupted the mountaineer, "can it be that leads your courtesy to this frightful place?"

"I have something to ask of some one," answered Ordener.

The astonishment of the three hosts redoubled with their curiosity.

"Listen, my lord stranger ; you appear not to know this country very well ; your courtesy is no doubt mistaken, it cannot be that you wish to go to Walderhog. Besides," added the mountaineer, "if he wishes to speak to some human being, he will not find any one."

"Except the demon," continued the woman.

"The demon! What demon?"

"Yes," continued she, "he for whom the tomb sings and the departed dance."

"Then you do not know, my lord," said the fisherman, lowering his voice and approaching Ordener, "you do not know that the grotto of Walderhog is usually the abode of . . ."

The woman stopped him.

"My lord and husband, do not pronounce that name, it brings ill-luck."

"The abode of who?" asked Ordener.

"Of a Beelzebub incarnate," said Kennibol.

"Truly, my kind hosts, I do not know what you mean. I was told that Walderhog was inhabited by Han of Iceland."

A triple cry of horror rose in the cottage.

"Well! You knew it! He is the demon!"

The woman bowed her drugged head-dress, vowing by all the saints that it was not she who had pronounced the name.

When the fisherman had recovered a little from his stupefaction, he stared fixedly at Ordener, as though there was something about the young man which he could not understand.

"I believe, my lord traveler, that I would have to live longer than my father, who died at the age of a hundred and twenty, before I would ever see a human being, endowed with reason and God-fearing, who would show you the road to Walderhog."

"No doubt," cried Maase; "but his courtesy will not go to this cursed grotto; for, in order to enter, a pact must be made with the devil!"

"I will go, my good hosts, and the greatest service you can render me will be to show me the shortest road."

"The shortest road to go where you wish to go," said the fisherman, "is to throw yourself from the top of a rock into the nearest torrent."

"Does it answer the same purpose," asked Ordener in a calm voice, "to choose a useless death rather than a useful danger?"

Braall shook his head whilst his brother fixed on the young adventurer a searching look.

"I understand," cried the fisherman suddenly, "you wish to earn the thousand royal écus which the high syndic have promised for the head of this demon of Iceland."

Ordener smiled.

"Young sir," continued the fisherman with emotion, "be advised by me, renounce this project. I am poor and old, but I would not give

up what remains of my life for your thousand royal écus, even if I were only to live a day."

The beseeching and compassionate eyes of the woman watched the effect which the prayer of her husband produced on the young man. Ordener hastened to respond :

"A greater interest makes me seek this brigand whom you call a demon ; it is for others than myself . . ."

The mountaineer, who had not taken his gaze from Ordener, interrupted him.

"I understand you now, I know why you seek this Iceland demon."

"I wish to force him to fight," said the young man.

"That is it," said Kennybol, "you are entrusted with great matters, are you not?"

"I have just told you."

The mountaineer approached the young man with a look of intelligence, and it was not without extreme astonishment that Ordener heard him whisper in his ear :

"It is for Count Schumacker of Griffenfeld, is it not?"

"My brave fellow," cried he, "how did you know?"

Indeed, it was difficult for him to imagine how a Norwegian mountaineer could come to know a secret which he had confided to no one, not even to General Levin.



Kennybol leaned towards him.

"I wish you good success," he continued in the same mysterious tone: "you are a noble young man to thus serve the oppressed."

Ordener's surprise was so great that he was hardly able to find words to ask the mountaineer how he knew the object of his journey.

"Silence," said Kennybol, placing his finger to his mouth, "I hope you will obtain what you desire from the inhabitant of Walderhog; my arm is devoted, like yours, to the prisoner of Munckholm."

Then raising his voice, before Ordener was able to reply, he said:

"Brother, and good sister Maase," continued he, "receive this respectable young man as a brother. Come, I think supper is ready."

"What!" interrupted Maase, "you have really persuaded his courtesy to renounce his intentions of visiting the demon?"

"Sister, pray that no harm comes to him. He is a noble and worthy young man. Come, brave sir, take some food and sleep with us. To-morrow I will show you your road, and we will go to hunt together, you for your devil, and I for my bear."

## XXIX.

Countryman, eh! to what countryman were  
you born? What child of man art thou to dare  
to thus come to attack Fafnir?

EDDA.

The first rays of the rising sun had hardly reddened the highest peak of the rock bordering the sea, when a fisherman, who had come before dawn to cast his nets within musket shot of the shore, opposite the entrance to the grotto of Walderhog, saw something like a figure wrapped in a cloak or a shroud, descend the rocks and disappear under the formidable vault of the cavern. Struck with terror, he commended his boat and his soul to Saint Usulph, and hastened to relate to his terror-stricken family how he had seen one of the spectres, which lived in the palace of Han of Iceland, re-enter the grotto at day-break.

This spectre, the terror and topic of conversation of future long winter evenings, was Ordener, the noble son of the viceroy of Norway, who whilst the two kingdoms

thought given up to secret attendance near his haughty betrothed, had come, alone and unknown, to risk his life for her to whom he had given his heart and future ; for the daughter of an exile.

Dismal forebodings, sinister predictions, had followed him on his journey ; he had just left the fisherman's family, where good Maase, after saying farewell had knelt in prayer before the threshold of her door. The mountaineer Kennybol and his six companions, who had showed him the road, had separated from him half a mile from Walderhog, and even these fearless hunters, who went laughingly to face a bear, had stood aghast for a long while watching the path which the adventurous traveler followed.

The young man entered the grotto of Walderhog as one enters a long-desired goal. He felt a heavenly joy in thinking that he was going to accomplish the object of his life, and that in a few minutes he would perhaps have given his blood for Ethel's sake. Ready to attack a brigand feared throughout an entire province, a monster, a demon perhaps, it was not this frightful figure which appeared to his imagination ; he only saw the image of a sweet virgin captive, no doubt praying for him before the altar in her prison. If he thought of anything but her, it was but to

scorn the perils which he had come so far to seek; but could any other thought find a place in a young heart which at that moment beat with the double exaltation of a great devotion and a noble love?

He advanced, head erect, under the resounding vault, whose thousand echoes multiplied the noise of his footsteps, without even looking at the stalactites, or at the circular basaltis which hung above his head, amongst moss, ivy and lichens, a confused mass of odd forms, which the superstitions of the Norwegian countrymen had more than once taken for crowds of demons or processions of phantoms.

With the same indifference he passed the tomb of King Walder, to which so many dismal traditions were attached, and he heard no other voice than the whistling of the breeze through the funereal galleries.

He continued his walk through the winding arcades, feebly lighted by clefts half closed with weeds and shrubs. His feet often struck against some remains, which rolled over the rock with a hollow sound, and presented, in the shadow, to his eyes the appearance of broken skulls, or jaws with long rows of white teeth.

But he felt no terror. He was only astonished at not meeting the formidable inhabitant of this horrible grotto.

He arrived in a sort of round hall, naturally formed in the flank of the rock. There the path which he had followed ended. The walls of the room had no other openings except large cracks through which one could see the forests and mountains beyond.

Surprised at having explored the whole of the fatal cavern unmolested, he began to despair of meeting the brigand. A monument of singular shape, placed in the middle of the underground room, attracted his attention. Three long massive stones, placed upright on the ground supported a fourth, large and square, like three pillars with a roof. Under this kind of gigantic tripod was a sort of altar, likewise formed of a single piece of granite, pierced with a circular hole in the middle of its upper face. Ordener recognized one of those colossal Druidical structures which he had often noticed in his travels in Norway, the most astonishing examples of which, in France, are perhaps those of Cokmariaker and of Carnac. Strange buildings which one may see, placed on the earth like tents set up for a day, whose weight alone gives them solidity.

The young man, given up to his reveries, sat down mechanically on this altar, which was browned as though it had drank deeply of the blood of human victims.

Suddenly he was startled by a voice, which seemed to come out of the stone.

"Young man, your feet touched your tomb when you came here."

He arose suddenly, and grasped his sabre, whilst an echo, feeble as the voice of the dead, distinctly repeated in the depths of the grotto :

"Young man, your feet touched your tomb when you came here."

At this moment a horrid head, with red hair, rose at the other side of the altar, laughing atrociously.

"Young man," it repeated, "yes, when you came here your feet touched your tomb."

And the young man answered coolly by placing his hand on his sword.

The monster came from behind the Druidical altar and showed his thick-set sinewy limbs, his savage and bloody clothes, his hooked hands and his heavy stone hatchet.

"It is I," said he with a growl like a wild beast.

"It is I," answered Ordener.

"I await thee."

"I do more," fearlessly replied the young man, "I seek thee."

The brigand crossed his arms.

"Dost thou know who I am?"

"Yes."

“And thou hast no fear?”

“I have no longer.”

“Then thou hadst fear in coming here?”

And the monster tossed his head triumphantly.

“That of not meeting thee.”

“Thou darest me, and yet thou hast just stumbled over human corpses!”

“To-morrow, perhaps they will jostle against thine.”

A fit of anger seized the little man. Ordener, unmoved, retained his calm bold attitude.

“Take care!” murmured the brigand; “I will fall upon thee, as the Norway hail upon a parasol.”

“I would ask no other shield against thee.”

One might say that there was something in Ordener’s look which cowed the monster. He began to pluck the nap of his cloak, as a tiger claws the sod before springing on its prey.

“Thou wilt learn from me what pity is,” said he.

“And from me, what scorn is.”

“Boy, thy voice is gentle, thy face is smooth, like the voice and face of a young girl; what death dost thou wish from me?”

“Thine.”

The little man laughed.

"Thou dost not know that I am a demon, that my spirit is the spirit of Ingulphus the Exterminator."

"I know that thou art a brigand, and that thou dost murder for gold."

"Thou art mistaken," interrupted the monster, "it is for blood."

"Hast thou not been paid by the d'Ahlefelds for assassinating Captain Dispolsen?"

"What sayest thou? What are these names?"

"Thou dost not know Captain Dispolsen, whom thou hast assassinated on the Sands of Urchtal?"

"That may be, but I have forgotten it, as I will have forgotten thee in three days."

"Thou dost not know Count d'Ahlefeld, who has paid thee to take an iron casket from the captain?"

"D'Ahlefeld! Wait; yes, I know the name. Yesterday I drank the blood of his son from the skull of my own."

Ordener shuddered with horror.

"Wert thou not content with thy wage?"

"What wage?" asked the brigand.

"Listen; thou mistakest; I must finish. Didst thou, eight days ago, steal an iron casket from one of thy victims, an officer from Munckholm?"

This word startled the brigand.



"An officer from Munckholm!" he hissed between his teeth.

Then he continued, with a movement of surprise :

"Art thou also an officer from Munckholm?"

"No," said Ordener.

"So much the worse."

And the brigand's features darkened.

"Listen," said Ordener, obstinately, "where is this casket thou stolest from the captain?"

The little man seemed to think for a moment.

"By Ingulphus! How this iron box fills their heads. I warn thee that they will seek less for that which holds thy bones, if even they are placed in a coffin."

These words, showing Ordener that the brigand knew the casket about which he spoke, gave him new hopes of recovering it.

"Tell me what thou hast done with the casket. Is it in possession of Count d'Ahlefeld?"

"No."

"Thou liest, for thou laughest."

"Believe what thou wouldst. What is it to me?"

The monster had indeed assumed an air of raillery which provoked Ordener's defiance.

He saw that there was nothing to be done except to put him into a fury, or to intimidate him, if possible.

"Understand me," said he, raising his voice, "thou must give me the casket."

The other answered by a savage laugh.

"Thou must give it to me!" repeated the young man in a thundering voice.

"Art thou accustomed to give orders to buffaloes and to bears?" replied the monster with the same laugh.

"I will give them to satan in hell."

"Thou wilt do that very thing by and by."

Ordener drew his sabre, which flashed in the shadow like lightning.

"Obey!"

"Come on!" replied the other shaking his hatchet, "I was ready to break your bones and suck thy blood when thou camest, but I restrained myself, for I was curious to see how the sparrow would spring upon the vulture."

"Wretch," cried Ordener, "defend thyself!"

"It is the first time that any one said that to me," muttered the brigand, grinding his teeth.

Speaking thus, he leaped on to the granite altar and gathered himself together, like a leopard on top of a rock waiting to spring unexpectedly on the hunter.

Keeping his eyes fixed on the young man he seemed to be seeking the best means of springing upon him. Ordener's fate would have been sealed if he had wavered an instant. But he did not give the brigand time to consider, but threw himself upon him, driving the point of his sabre into his face.

Then commenced the most frightful battle imaginable. The little man, standing on the altar like a statue on its pedestal, seemed like one of the horrible idols, which, in the barbarian ages, received impious sacrifices and sacrilegious offerings.

The monster's movements were so rapid that, from whichever side Ordener attacked him, he found him facing him and swinging his hatchet. He would have been cut to pieces by the blows had he not fortunately wrapped his cloak about his left arm, in such a way that most of his enemies' blows were lost on this flowing shield. For several minutes they made useless efforts to wound each other.

The little man's flashing eyes started from their sockets. Surprised at the vigorous and audacious fight made by such a feeble looking adversary a sullen rage replaced his savage leers. The atrocious immobility of the savage's features and the calmness of Ordener's contrasted strongly with the rapidity of their movements and briskness of their attacks.

Nothing was heard but the clash of arms, the hurried steps of the young man, and the quick breathing of the combatants, when suddenly the little man gave a terrible roar. The head of his axe had just become entangled in the folds of the cloak. He shook his arm violently, but it only served to entangle the axe the more.

The formidable brigand felt the young man's sword against his breast.

"Listen to me once more," said Ordener triumphantly; "wilt thou give me back the iron coffer thee so cowardly stole?"

The little man was silent for a moment, then reddening, he said:

"No, curse thee!"

Ordener, without quitting his victorious and menacing attitude:

"Reflect!"

"No, I told thee no," repeated the brigand.

The noble young man lowered his sabre.

"Well," said he, "disengage thy hatchet from the folds of my cloak so that we can continue."

A disdainful laugh was the monster's only response.

"Boy, thou art generous, as though I had need of it!"

Before the surprised Ordener was able to turn his head, he had placed his foot on the

shoulders of his loyal vanquisher, and with a bound he was a dozen steps away. With another bound he was upon Ordener. He hung upon him like a panther digging his claws into the flank of a lion. His nails dug into the young man's shoulder ; his naked knees pressed against his hips, whilst his frightful face presented to Ordener's eyes the bloody mouth and savage teeth ready to tear him. He no longer spoke ; no human words escaped his panting gullet ; only a deep growling, mingled with hoarse, fierce cries, expressed his rage. It was something more hideous than a ferocious beast, more monstrous than a demon ; it was a man of whom no human traits remained.

Ordener had wavered under the assaults of the little man, and would have fallen under the unexpected blow, if one of the large pillars of the Druidical monument had not been behind to support him. He remained half fallen on his back, and out of breath under the weight of his formidable enemy. When one remembers that what we have just described took place in less time than we have taken to describe this it will be understood how horrible the attack was.

As we have said, the noble young man had staggered, but he did not tremble. He hastened to give a last thought to his Ethel.

This thought of love was like a prayer ; it gave him new strength. He encircled the monster with both arms ; then, seizing the blade of his sabre in the middle, drove the point in his spine. The brigand made a frightful outcry, and with a leap, which shook Ordener, he escaped from the arms of his fearless adversary and fell away some paces, carrying in his teeth a scrap of the green mantle which he had bitten in his fury.

He rose, supple and agile as a young chamois, and the combat recommenced for the third time in a manner more terrible than ever. Chance had placed the monster near a mass of stones, between which moss and brambles had grown for centuries. Two men of ordinary strength would hardly have been able to lift one of these masses. The brigand seized one of them in both hands and balanced it above his head. At this moment his appearance was frightful. The stone, hurled with violence traveled slowly through the air, and the young man had only time to step aside and escape. The granite block broke upon the walls of the cave with a frightful noise which echoed through the depths of the grotto.

Ordener had hardly time to recover his presence of mind, when a second mass was balanced in the brigand's hands. Irritated at

being so cowardly stoned, he sprang towards the little man, sabre in hand, hoping to change the fight; but the formidable block, flying through the air, struck the frail naked blade, which fell in pieces like broken glass; and the monster's wild laugh filled the cavern.

Ordener was disarmed.

"Hast thou anything to say to God or the devil before dying?" cried the monster.

His eyes flamed, and all his muscles were swollen with rage and joy; sprang for his hatchet which was lying on the ground in the folds of the mantle—poor Ethel!

Suddenly a distant uproar was heard from without. The monster stopped. The noise redoubled; the shouts of men mingled with the plaintive moans of a bear. The brigand listened. The doleful cries continued. He quickly seized his hatchet and sprang, not towards Ordener, but towards one of the clefts of which we have already spoken as giving light. Ordener, struck with surprise at being thus forgotten, sprang to one of these natural doors, and saw, in a neighboring meadow, a great bear held at bay by seven hunters, amongst whom he could distinguish Kennybol.

He turned. The brigand was no longer in the grotto, but he heard from without a frightful voice crying:

"Friend! Friend! I am coming! Look!"

### XXX.

Pierre, the good fellow, had lost all by the dice.

*Régnier.*

The Munckholm regiment of musketeers was marching through the defiles between Drontheim and Skongen. Sometimes when crossing a torrent, the long line of bayonets could be seen like a serpent with its scales glittering in the sun ; at other times it formed a spiral twist about a mountain like triumphal columns about which wind battalions in bronze. The soldiers marched along showing feelings of ill-humor and discontent, for these fine fellows like nothing but fighting or ease. The coarse jokes and old sarcasms which delighted them the day before amused them no more ; besides, the air was cold and the sky was cloudy. In order to raise a laugh in the ranks, a cantinière had to awkwardly fall from her horse, or a tin saucepan had to go bounding from rock to rock to the bottom of a precipice.

In order to dispel for little the weariness of the march Lieutenant Randmer, a young



Danish baron, hailed old Captain Lory, a soldier of fortune. The captain marched along, sombre and silent, with a heavy but sure step; the lieutenant, gay and careless, swung a switch which he had cut from the brushwood along the road-side.

"Well, captain, what is the matter? You are sad."

"I certainly have cause to be so," answered the old officer without raising his head.

"Come, come, no grief; look at me, am I sad? and I warrant I have at least as much cause to be as you."

"I doubt it, Baron Randmer; I have lost my only comfort, I have lost all my fortune."

"Captain Lory, our misfortune is precisely the same. Not two weeks ago Lieutenant Alberick won from me, by a throw of the dice, my fine castle of Randmer and its dependencies. I am ruined; but do you see me any the less gay on that account?"

The captain answered in a voice full of sorrow:

"Lieutenant, you have only lost your fine castle; but I,—I have lost my dog."

At this answer the young man's frivolous features were undecided between laughter and compassion.

"Captain," said he, "console yourself; why, I, who have lost my castle . . ."

The other interrupted him.

"What of that? Besides, you will win another castle."

"And you will find another dog."

The old man shook his head.

"Find another dog; I will never recover my poor Drake."

He stopped; large tears gathered in his eyes and fell one by one upon his hard and weather-beaten face.

"I have never," continued he, "loved any one but him; I have never known father nor mother. May God give thee peace, as well as to poor Drake!—Lieutenant Randmer, he saved my life in the Pomeranian war; I called him Drake in honor of the famous admiral.—He was a fine dog! He never changed towards me with my changes of fortune. After the battle of Oholfen, great General Schack patted him with his hand, saying to me: 'You have there a very fine dog, Sergeant Lory!' For then I was still only a sergeant."

"Ah!" interrupted the young baron, swinging his switch, "It must seem queer to be a sergeant."

The old soldier of fortune did not hear; he seemed to be talking to himself, and only some inarticulate words escaped his lips.

"Poor Drake! To escape safe and sound so often from breaches and trenches, only to be drowned like a cat in the cursed Gulf of Drontheim! My poor dog! My brave friend! You were worthy of dying, like me, on the field of battle."

"Brave captain," cried the lieutenant, "how can you remain so sad? We will fight perhaps to-morrow."

"Yes," answered the old captain disdainfully, "against rare enemies!"

"What, these brigands the miners! These devils the mountaineers!"

"Stone-cutters, highway robbers! Gentlemen who in battle do not even know how to form the pig's head or Gustavus Adolphus' corner! Nice rabble to face such as I, who went through all the wars of Pomerania and of Holstein! The campaigns of Scania and of Dalecarlie! I, who fought under glorious General Schack, and under valiant Count Guldenlew!"

"But, don't you know," interrupted Randmer, "these brigands have a celebrated chief, a giant as strong and savage as Goliath, a brigand who drinks nothing but human blood, a demon in every way satanic."

"Who?" asked the other.

"Why! The famous Han of Iceland!"

"Phew! I wager this formidable general does not even know how to load a musket in four movements or to load a carbine!"

Randmer burst into laughter.

"Yes, laugh away," continued the captain. "It will be very fine indeed to cross good sabres with vile picks and noble pikes with pitch-forks! Worthy enemies! My poor Drake would not have condescended to take one of them by the leg!"

The captain continued to give free rein to his indignation, until he was interrupted by the arrival of an officer who ran towards them quite out of breath.

"Captain Lory! My dear Randmer!"

"Well?" said they together.

"Friends, I am frozen with horror!—d'Ahlefeld! Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld! The son of the grand chancellor! You know, my dear Baron Randmer, Frederick—so elegant—so foppish! . . ."

"Yes," answered the young baron, "very elegant! Nevertheless, at the last ball at Charlottenburg, my disguise was in much better taste than his.—But what has happened to him?"

"I know of whom you speak," said Lory at the same time, "Frederick d'Ahlefeld, the lieutenant of the third company, who wears blue facings. He is careless enough about his duty."

"They will never complain about him again, Captain Lory."

"Why?" said Randmer.

"He is in garrison at Walhstrom," continued the old captain coldly.

"Precisely," added the other, "the colonel has just received a message.—Poor Frederick!"

"But what of him? Captain Bollar, you frighten me."

Old Lory continued:

"Phew! Our fop has missed a roll call, as usual; the captain has sent the son of the grand chancellor to prison; that, I am sure, is all the misfortune that has happened to so disturb you."

Bollar placed his hand on Lory's shoulder.

"Captain Lory, Lieutenant d'Ahlefeld has been devoured alive."

The two captains looked fixedly at each other, and Randmer, astonished for a moment, suddenly began to laugh boisterously.

"Ah! Ah! Captain Bollar, I see that you keep up your practical jokes. But I warn you I will not be fooled."

And the lieutenant, crossing his arms, gave free play to his gayety, swearing that what amused him most was the credulity with which Lory accepted the amusing inventions of Bollar. The tale, said he, was really droll, it was quite a bright idea to have Frederick,

who gave so much tender and ridiculous care to his skin, devoured alive.

"Randmer," said Bollar gravely, "you are a fool. I tell you d'Ahlefeld is dead. I have it from the colonel—dead!"

"Oh! How well he plays his rôle!" replied the baron, still laughing, "how amusing he is!"

Bollar shrugged his shoulders, and turned towards old Lory, who coolly asked for details.

"Yes, truly, my dear Captain Bollar," added the indefatigable mocker, "tell us how the poor devil was eaten. Did he form a breakfast for a wolf or a supper for a bear?"

"The colonel," said Bollar, "had just received a dispatch, which instructed the garrison of Walhstrom to fall back towards us, before a considerable party of the insurgents."

Old Lory knitted his brows.

"It was then," continued Bollar, "that Lieutenant Frederick d'Ahlefeld, having been hunting for the last three days, in the mountains near the ruin of Arbar, met there a monster, who carried him into his cavern and there devoured him."

Here Lieutenant Randmer redoubled his joyous exclamations.

"Oh! Oh! How easily good Lory believes fairy tales! It is fine, keep serious, my dear

Bollar. You are admirably droll. But you do not tell us what this monster, this ogre, this vampire is, that has carried and eaten a lieutenant as though he were a young kid!"

"I won't tell *you*," murmured Bollar impatiently; "but I will tell Lory, who is not so idiotically incredulous.—My dear Lory, the monster who has drunk Frederick's blood is Han of Iceland."

"The colonel of the brigands!" cried the old officer.

"Well, my brave Lory," said the railler Randmer, "has one any need of the manual of arms when one chews so well?"

"Baron Randmer," said Bollar, "you have the same character as d'Ahlefeld; take care that you have not the same end."

"I swear," cried the young man, "that what amuses me the most is the serious imperturbability of Captain Bollar."

"And," replied Bollar, "what frightens me most, is the inexhaustible gayety of Lieutenant Randmer."

At this moment a group of officers who appeared to be holding an exciting conversation, approached.

"Ah, 'egad," cried Randmer, "I must amuse them with this invention of Bollar's—Comrades," said he advancing towards them,

"haven't you heard? poor Frederick d'Ahlefeld has just been crunched up alive by the barbarous Han of Iceland."

At these words, he could not suppress a burst of laughter, which, to his great surprise, was received by the new-comers by cries of indignation.

"What, you laugh! I would not have believed that Randmer would repeat such news in such a manner—laugh at such a misfortune!"

"What," said Randmer, troubled, "can it be that it is true?"

"Why! you have just said it!" cried they, "can it be that you do not believe your own words?"

"But I thought it was a joke of Bollar's."

An old officer spoke.

"The joke would have been in bad taste; but unfortunately it is not one. Baron Woethaün, our colonel, has just received the fatal news."

"A horrible adventure! It is frightful!" repeated the crowd together.

"So we are going," said one of them, "to fight wolves and bears with human faces!"

"We will receive musket shots," said another, "without knowing where they come from; we will be killed one by one, like pheasants in a pigeon-house."



“The death of d’Ahlefeld,” cried Bollar in a solemn voice, “makes one shudder. Our regiment is unfortunate. The death of Dispolsen, that of the poor soldiers found at Cascadthymore, and that of d’Ahlefeld; three tragic events in a very short time.”

Young Baron Randmer, who had remained silent, awoke from his reverie.

“It seems impossible,” said he; “Frederick danced so well!”

And after this profound reflection, he became silent, whilst Captain Lory vowed that he was very much afflicted at the death of the young lieutenant, and remarked to the second musketeer, Toric Belfast, that the copper of his shoulder strap was not so bright as usual.

## XXXI.

Hush ! Hush ! There is a man descending  
by means of a ladder.

Ah ! Yes, it is a spy.

. . . . .  
Heaven could not grant me a greater favor  
than the power to give up to you my life. I am  
with you ; but tell, I pray, to whom this army  
belongs ?

To the Comte de Barcelone.

What count ?

LOPE DE VEGA—*La Fuerza latimosa.*

There is something sinister and desolate in  
the aspect of a flat and barren country, when  
the sun has disappeared, and one is alone,  
when the rustle of the dried-up grass, and the  
monotonous cry of the grasshoppers is the  
only sound heard ; and when one sees only  
dark shapeless clouds upon the horizon, like  
phantoms or ghosts.

Such was the impression which mingled  
with Ordener's sad thoughts, the evening of  
this fruitless meeting with the brigand of  
Iceland. Stunned for a moment by his sudden

disappearance, he at first wished to follow him, but he became lost in the heath, and he had wandered all day over the wildest and most savage country, without finding any trace of man. At sunset, he found himself in the middle of a large plain which showed on all sides an equal circular horizon where nothing promised shelter to the young traveler worn out with fatigue and hunger.

It would have been bad enough if his bodily sufferings had not been aggravated by his sadness of mind ; but, alas, it was so ! He had attained the end of his journey but had not fulfilled its object. He had not now even the fond hopes that he had when in pursuit of the brigand ; and now in place of them he had nothing but discouraging thoughts. What would he do ? How could he return to Schumacker without being able to ask his benediction with Ethel ? And what had become of the fatal casket ? And his marriage with Ulrica d'Ahlefeld ! Perhaps he might at least rescue Ethel from her disgraceful captivity and fly with her, seeking happiness in some distant exile !

He wrapped himself in his cloak and laid down upon the ground. The sky was black ; stormy and ragged clouds tore along at intervals like funereal crape, driven by a cold wind which swept across the plain. The young

man hardly thought of these signs of the approach of a violent storm ; and besides, could he find a refuge from the storm any more than from his miserable thoughts ?

Suddenly he heard confused sounds of human voices. Surprised, he lifted his head and noticed, a short distance away, something like shadows moving about in the darkness. He watched them ; a light shone in the midst of the mysterious group, and Ordener saw, with an astonishment easy to conceive, each of the phantasmagorial figures descend into the earth one by one. All disappeared.

Ordener was above the superstitions of his time and country. His grave and mature mind knew nothing of the vain beliefs of the strange terrors which torment the infancy of a people as well as the child born of man.

Nevertheless there was something supernatural in this singular apparition which filled him with a feeling contrary to reason ; for he did not feel sure that the spirits of the dead did sometimes come back to earth.

He rose, made the sign of the cross, and moved towards the place where the visions had disappeared. Large drops of rain began to fall ; his cloak fluttered like a sail, and the plume of his hat, tormented by the wind, beat upon his face.

Suddenly he stopped—a light showed across his path from a sort of large circular pit, into which he would certainly have fallen if the light had not luckily shone. He approached the opening. A vague flickering light showed at the bottom of an immense hole of frightful depth, hollowed in the bowels of the earth. These lights, which seemed like a magic fire burned by gnomes, accentuated, in some way, the darkness which the eye had to pierce to discover it.

The fearless young man, at the edge of the abyss, listened. The distant murmur of voices reached him. He had no doubt that the mysterious beings which appeared and disappeared before his eyes had gone down in the pit, and he felt an irrepressible desire, doubtless the destiny of his fate, to follow them; he felt ready even to follow the spectres even into the mouth of hell. Besides, the storm was beginning with fury, and this pit offered a shelter. But how to descend? How had those, whom he wished to follow, gone down, if they were not ghosts? A second gleam came to his rescue, and he saw at his feet the upper end of a ladder, which disappeared in the depths of the pit. It was formed of a stout vertical joist, through which, at regular distances, were driven short horizontal bars of iron intended for the feet and hands

of those who dared to venture into the chasm.

Orderer did not hesitate. He daringly swung himself on to the ladder, and descended into the abyss, without knowing where it led and not knowing whether he would ever see daylight again. Soon he could no longer see the sky above his head. Soon the heavy rain which beat upon the surface of the earth came to him only as vapor or mist. Soon the uproar of the storm was heard only as moaning. He went down, down, and yet hardly seemed to get nearer to the light. Undiscouraged, however, he kept on, although a misstep might at any moment have thrown him into the abyss.

Meanwhile, the air became closer, the sound of voices became more distinct, the light began to color the walls of the pit—signs that he was at least nearing the bottom. He descended a few steps farther and could clearly see at the foot of the ladder the entrance to a tunnel from which came the following words :

“Kennybol has not arrived,” said a voice impatiently.

“What can be keeping him?” said the same voice after a moment’s silence.

“We do not know, Master Hacket,” was answered.

“He was to pass the night in the house of his sister, Maase Braall, in the village of Surb,” added another voice.

“You see,” said the first speaker, “I keep all my engagements. I agreed to bring you Han of Iceland for a chief; I have brought him.”

A murmur, difficult to understand, answered the words. Ordener’s curiosity, already awakened by the mention of Kennybol’s name, redoubled when he heard that of Han of Iceland.

The same voice continued :

“My friends, Jonas and Norbith, if Kennybol is late, what does it matter? We are already numerous enough to fear nothing; did you find your standards in the ruins of Crag?”

“Yes, Master Hacket,” answered many voices.

“Well! Raise the standard, everything is ready!”

“There is the money! There is your invincible chief. Courage! March to the deliverance of noble Schumacker, the unfortunate Count Griffenfeld!”

“Long live Schumacker!” repeated the crowd in one voice. And the name of Schumacker re-echoed through the cavern.

Ordener, full of curiosity and astonishment, listened, panting with excitement. He could

neither believe nor understand what he heard. Schumacker mixed up with Kannybol and Han of Iceland ! What dark tragedy was brooding ?

“ Listen,” continued the same voice, “ you see the friend, the confidant of Count Griffenfeld.”

It was the first time that Ordener had ever heard the voice. It continued :

“ Give me your confidence, as I give you mine. Friends, everything favors you ; you will reach Drontheim without meeting a single enemy.”

“ Master Hacket,” interrupted a voice, “ lead us on. Peters tells me he saw the entire Munckholm regiment marching through the defiles against us.”

“ You are mistaken,” answered the other with authority. “ The government as yet knows nothing of your revolt, and its fancied security is such that he who rejects your just complaints, your oppressor, and the oppressor of the illustrious and unfortunate Schumacker, General Levin de Knud, has left Drontheim to go to the capitol to assist at the celebration of the famous marriage of his pupil, Ordener Guldenlew, with Ulrica d’Ahlefeld.”

One can imagine Ordener’s feelings, to hear in this wild and desert country, under this mysterious vault, all the names of those in



whom he was interested, and above all even his very own ! A fearful doubt rose in his mind. Could it be true ? Was this really an agent of Count Griffenfeld whose voice he heard ? What ! Schumacker, the venerable old man, the noble father of his noble Ethel, revolting against the king his lord, consorting with brigands, starting a civil war ! And it was for this hypocrite, for this rebel, that he, son of the viceroy of Norway, pupil of General Levin, had compromised his future, had risked his life ! It was for him that he had sought out and fought this Icelandic brigand, with whom Schumacker seemed to be in confidence, since he had been placed at the head of these brigands ! Who knows that even the iron casket, for which he, Ordener, had been ready to spill his blood, did not contain the secrets of this disgraceful plot ? Or perhaps the vindictive prisoner of Munckholm had played with him ? Perhaps he had discovered his name ; perhaps, and how dismal this thought was to the generous young man, he had hoped, by encouraging this fatal journey, to get rid of the son of an enemy ?

Alas ! such were the disconsolate thoughts that crowded upon Ordener's mind. The noble young man wished himself dead at this fatal moment ; it seemed to him that all pleasure in life was gone. There were many

things in the assertions of he who spoke as the envoy of Griffenfeld which seemed contradictory or doubtful ; but as it all seemed intended to mislead the unfortunate mountaineers, Schumacker was none the less guilty in his eyes, and Schumacker was the father of his Ethel !

These thoughts so disturbed him that he almost fell. He recovered and continued to listen ; for one sometimes waits with inexplicable impatience for unhappiness that is none the less.

“ Yes, ” continued the voice of the envoy, “ you are commanded by the formidable Han of Iceland. Who will dare to oppose you ? Your cause is that of your wives and of your children unjustly deprived of your rights ; of an unfortunate nobleman, for twenty years unjustly held in an infamous prison. Come, Schumacker and liberty await you. Death to the tyrants ! ”

“ Death ! ” repeated a thousand voices ; and throughout the cavern could be heard the noise of arms and the sound of mountain horns.

“ Stop ! ” cried Ordener. He had precipitately descended the remainder of the ladder. The idea of sparing Schumacker this crime and so much unhappiness to his country filled his mind. But, the moment that he appeared

on the threshold of the cavern, the fear came to him that he might, by imprudent remarks, lose the father of his Ethel and perhaps Ethel herself, and this fear drowned all other thoughts; so that he stood there, pale and astonished, gazing at the singular picture which appeared to his sight.

It was like an immense square in a subterranean town surrounded by pillars which supported the roof. These pillars shone like columns of crystal and reflected the torches borne by strangely dressed and queerly armed men. One might well have taken it for one of the fabulous meetings of which the old chronicles speak, of sorcerers and demons who carried stars for torches, and who lit up at night the old woods and crumbling castles.

A loud cry arose.

“A stranger! Death! Death!”

A hundred arms were already raised against Ordener. He put his hand to his side to grasp his sword. Noble young man! In his generous impulse he had forgotten that he was alone and unarmed.

“Hold, hold!” cried a voice, which Ordener knew as that of Schumacker’s envoy.

He was a little fat man, dressed in black, with false and glittering eyes. He advanced towards Ordener.

“Who are you?” said he.

Ordener did not answer; he was seized by many hands and there was no place on his breast upon which the point of a sword or the barrel of a pistol did not rest.

"Are you afraid?" asked the little man with a smile.

"If your hand were upon my heart instead of these swords," said the young man coldly, "you would find that it beat no faster than yours, supposing you have a heart."

"Ah! Ah!" said the little man, "he is high-spirited! Well! He may die." And he turned on his heel.

"Give me death," replied Ordener; "it is all I wish of you."

"A moment, Master Hacket," said an old man with a bushy beard, who leaned upon his musket. "You are in my house, and I have the sole right to send this Christian to meet the dead whom he has seen here."

Master Hacket began to laugh. "By my faith, friend Jonas, as you please. It makes little difference whether this spy is judged by you or by me, provided he is condemned."

The old man turned towards Ordener:

"Come, tell us who you are, who you so daringly wish to know who we are."

Ordener remained silent. Surrounded by the partisans of the very Schumacker for

whom he would so willingly have given his blood, he felt no other desire than to die.

"His courtesy does not wish to answer," said the old man, "when the fox is caught he no longer cries. Kill him."

"My brave Jonas," said Hacket, "suppose we let the death of this man be the first exploit of Han of Iceland among you."

"Yes, yes!" cried several voices.

Ordener, astonished, but still undaunted, looked everywhere for the eyes of Han of Iceland, with whom he had so valiantly fought for his life that very morning, and saw, with redoubled surprise, a man of colossal stature, dressed in the costume of a mountaineer, advance towards him. The giant fixed a look of stupid atrocity upon Ordener, and asked for a hatchet.

"You are not Han of Iceland," said Ordener decidedly.

"Let him die! Let him die!" cried Hacket in a furious voice.

Ordener saw that he must die. He put his hands into his breast to draw out the lock of Ethel's hair to give it a last kiss. This movement caused a paper to fall from his belt.

"What is the paper?" said Hacket. "Nor-bith, take the paper."

This Norbith was a young man whose dark, hard features had an expression of nobleness. He picked up the paper and unfolded it.

"Good God !" cried he, "it is the pass of my poor friend Christopher Nedlam, my unfortunate comrade who was executed a week ago in the public square at Skongen for passing false money."

"Well !" said Hacket in a disappointed tone, "keep the paper. I thought it of more importance. You, my dear Han of Iceland, may expedite your man."

Young Norbith placed himself in front of Ordener, crying :

"This man is under my protection. My head will fall before a single hair of his. I will not allow the safe conduct of my friend Christopher Nedlam to be violated."

Ordener, so miraculously protected, bowed his head in shame ; for he remembered how disdainfully he had accepted the gift of the Chaplain Athanasius Munder:—"May the gift of the dying be a benefit to the traveler !"

"Give me my hatchet," repeated the giant.

"He shall not die !" cried Norbith. "What would the spirit of poor Nedlam say, who was so unjustly hung ? I assure you that he will not die ; for Nedlam did not wish him to die."

"Indeed," said old Jonas, "Norbith is right. How can you wish to kill this stranger, Master Hacket? He has the pass of Christopher Nedlam."

"But he is a spy, a spy," replied Hacket.

The old man placed himself beside the young man in front of Ordener, and they said gravely together :

"He has the pass of Christopher Nedlam, who was hung at Skongen."

Hacket saw that he must give in; for all the others began to murmur, saying that the stranger could not die, since he carried the safe conduct of Nedlam the Counterfeiter.

"Come," said he, between his teeth, with concentrated rage. "Let him live then. Besides it is your business."

"If he were the devil I would not kill him," said Norbith, triumphantly.

So speaking, he turned to Ordener.

"Listen," continued he, "you should be a good comrade, since you have the pass of Nedlam, my poor friend. We are the royal miners. We are revolting so as to get rid of the tax. Master Hacket, whom you see, says that we take up arms for a certain Count Schumacker; but I do not know him. Stranger, our cause is just. Listen, and answer as though you were answering your patron saint. Do you wish to join us?"

An idea occurred to Ordener.

"Yes," replied he.

Norbith offered him a sabre, which he received in silence.

"Brother," said the young chief, "if you wish to betray us, you will commence by killing me."

At this moment the sound of a trumpet sounded under the arches of the mine and distant voices were heard saying: "Here is Kennybol."



## XXXII.

He has thoughts in his head which rise to the heavens.

*Spanish Romances.*

Sometimes the mind has a sudden inspiration, which a multitude of thought would not have solved better.

Therefore we will not try to analyze the willful and secret impulse which, by the proposal of young Norbith, threw the noble son of the viceroy of Norway, like an outlaw, among a crowd of revolting bandits. It was, doubtless, a desire to solve this dark mystery, mingled with a bitter disgust of life, a careless despair of the future ; perhaps some doubt of the guilt of Schumacker, inspired by the suspicious appearance of the men, whose sinister looks struck the young man, or by an unconscious belief in truth ; and above all by his love for Ethel. And, finally : one clear-sighted friend might be of use to Schumacker among all these blind partisans.

### XXXIII.

Is that the chief? His looks frighten me ;  
I dare not speak to him.

MATURIN—*Bertram.*

When he heard the cries which announced the arrival of the famous hunter Kennybol, Hacket sprang towards him, leaving Ordener with the two other chiefs.

“ You are here at last, my dear Kennybol ! Come, let me present you to your formidable chief, Han of Iceland.”

Upon hearing this name, Kennybol, who was pale, breathless and disordered, his face bathed in sweat and his hands covered with blood, sprang back.

“ Han of Iceland !”

“ Come,” said Hacket, “ be calm ! He has come to help you. Look on him only as a friend, as a companion.”

Kennybol did not hear him.

“ Han of Iceland here !” he repeated.

“ Why ! Yes,” said Hacket with an equivocal laugh ; “ are you afraid of him ?”

“What!” interrupted the hunter for the third time, “you swear to me—Han of Iceland in this mine?”

Hacket turned towards the others:

“Can our brave Kennybol be crazy?”

Then, addressing Kennybol:

“I see that it is fear of Han of Iceland that has made you late.”

Kennybol raised his hand to heaven.

“By Etheldera, martyred saint of Norway, it was not fear of Han of Iceland, Master Hacket, but Han of Iceland himself, I swear to you, that prevented me from being here sooner.”

These words created a murmur of astonishment amongst the crowd of mountaineers and miners which surrounded the speakers, and caused the same cloud upon Hacket’s brow that Ordener’s greeting had only a few minutes before.

“What! What do you say?” asked he, lowering his voice.

“I say, Master Hacket, that if it had not been for your cursed Han of Iceland I would have been here before the first cry of the owl.”

“Indeed! What has he done to you?”

“Oh! Do not ask me; but may my beard get white in a day if any one ever again finds me bear-hunting.”

“Have you nearly been eaten up by a bear?”

Kennybol shrugged his shoulders in disdain :

"A bear ! A fine enemy ! Kennybol eaten by a bear ! For what do you take me, Master Hacket ?"

"Ah, I beg your pardon," said Hacket, smiling.

"If you knew what had happened to me, my brave sir," said the old hunter lowering his voice, "you would not again tell me that Han of Iceland is here."

Hacket again seemed disconcerted. He caught Kennybol roughly by the arm, as though he feared he would approach the spot where, above the heads of the miners, appeared the enormous head of the giant.

"My dear Kennybol," said he, in a voice almost solemn, "tell me, I pray you, what made you late. You know that just at this time it might perhaps be of the greatest importance."

"That is true," said Kennybol, after a moment of reflection.

Then, yielding to Hacket's repeated requests, he told him how, that very morning, aided by six companions, he had driven a white bear to the neighborhood of the grotto of Walderhog, without noticing in the heat of the pursuit, that they were near that dreaded place ; how the roars of the bear at bay had

attracted a little man, a monster, a demon, who, armed with a stone hatchet, threw himself upon them in defense of the bear. The appearance of this sort of devil, who could be no other than Han, the Icelandic demon, had frozen all seven with horror; finally, his six unfortunate comrades had fallen victims of the two monsters, and he, Kennybol, only owed his safety to prompt flight which had not been prevented, thanks to his agility, to Han of Iceland's fatigue, and, above all, to the protection of the kindly patron of the huntsman, Saint Sylvestre.

"You see, Master Hacket," said he, finishing his story, which he had ornamented with all the mountaineer's flowers of rhetoric, and still full of his terror, "you see that if I am late, it is not I who should be blamed, and that it is impossible that the demon of Iceland, whom I left this morning in the heather near Walderhog with his bear, crunching the bodies of my six poor comrades, could now be here, as your friend, in the mine of Apsyl-Corh, at this meeting. I protest that it is not possible. I know him, now, the demon incarnate; I have seen him!"

Hacket, who had listened attentively, began in a grave voice:

"My brave friend Kennybol, when you speak of Han of Iceland or of hell, do not

think anything impossible. I knew all that you have just told me."

An expression of most extreme astonishment and naïve credulity appeared in the features of the old hunter of the Kole Mountains.

"What!"

"Yes," continued Hacket, in whose face an acute observer might have seen something triumphant and sardonic, "I knew all, except however that you were the hero of this sad adventure. Han of Iceland told it to me as we came here."

"Truly?" said Kennybol; and his gaze on Hacket became one of respect and fear.

Hacket continued with the same coolness:

"No doubt of it; but now, be easy, I am going to lead you to this formidable Han of Iceland."

Kennybol gave a cry of terror.

"Have no fear, I tell you," continued Hacket. "You must look upon him only as your chief and comrade; only be careful not to remind him of anything that happened this morning. You understand?"

He had to yield, but it was only with internal repugnance that he consented to allow himself to be presented to the demon. He advanced towards the group where Ordener, Jonas and Norbith were.

“My good Jonas, my dear Norbith,” said Kennybol, “may God help you!”

“We have need of him, Kennybol,” said Jonas.

At this moment Kennybol noticed Ordener, who was looking at him.

“Ah! you here, young man,” said he, stepping quickly towards him and holding out his rough hand, “welcome. It seems that your daring has been successful.”

Ordener, who did not understand what the mountaineer seems to know so well, was about to ask an explanation, when Norbith cried:

“You know this stranger then, Kennybol?”

“By my guardian angel! Do I know him? I love him and esteem him. He is as devoted as we are to the good cause.”

And he threw towards Ordener a second look of intelligence, which he was about to answer, when Hacket, who had been to look for his giant, whom all the bandits seemed to avoid with terror, hailed them, saying:

“My brave huntsman, Kennybol, here is your chief, the famous Han of Klipstadur!”

Kennybol threw upon the gigantic brigand a glance more of surprise than of fear, and whispered in Hacket's ear.

“ Master Hacket, the Han of Iceland which I left this morning at Walderhog was a little man.”

Hacket replied in a low voice :

“ You forget, Kennybol ! a demon ! ”

“ True,” said the credulous hunter, “ he has changed his form.”

And he turned away trembling to furtively make the sign of the cross.



## XXXIV.

The mask approached; it was Angelo himself; the rogue knew his business; he must make sure of it.

LESSING.

It was in a sombre forest of old oaks, where daylight hardly penetrated, that a short man hailed another who appeared to be waiting and alone. The following conversation commenced with lowered voices :

“ I hope your grace will deign to pardon me if I am late ! Many incidents have made me late.”

“ What were they ?”

“ The chief of the mountaineers, Kennybol, did not arrive at the meeting place until midnight and we were besides disturbed by an unexpected witness.”

“ Who ?”

“ By a man who blundered like a fool into the midst of our sanhedrim. I thought at first that he was a spy, and I wished to dispatch him ; but he carried a safeguard from some one very much respected by our miners,

and they took him under their protection. I considered, on reflection, that he could be nothing but a curious traveler or a crazy savant. At any rate, I have made allowance for him."

"Did everything else go well?"

"Very well. The miners of Guldbranshal and Faroe, commanded by young Norbith and old Jonas, and the mountaineers of Kole, led by Kennybol, should be on the march at this moment. At four miles from the Blue Star, their companions of Hubfalls and Sund-Moër will join them; those at Konigsberg and the troop of Smiasen iron-workers who have already forced the garrison of Walhstrom to retreat, as the noble count knows, are waiting some miles further on. Finally, my dear and honored master, all the bands, joined together, will halt to-night two miles from Skongen, in the gorges of the North Post."

"But your Han of Iceland, how have they received him?"

"With entire credulity."

"Can I not avenge myself on this monster for the death of my son? What a misfortune that he escaped!"

"My noble lord, first of all use the name of Han of Iceland to avenge yourself on Schumacker, and you will afterwards find a way to avenge yourself upon Han himself.

The insurgents will march all to-day and will halt to-night to pass the night in the defile of North Post, two miles from Skongen."

"What! You will let such a considerable mob assemble so near Skongen?—MUSDÆMON!"

"A suspicion, noble count! Your grace has only to send, this very moment, a messenger to Colonel Vœthaün, whose entire regiment should now be at Skongen; notify him that all the forces of the rebels will be camped to-night in the defile of the North Post, which seems to have been expressly created for an ambuscade."

"I understand you; but why, my dear fellow, have you done this if the rebels are so numerous?"

"The more formidable the insurrection, my lord, the greater the crime of Schumacker and the greater your victory. Besides, what difference does it make if it is cut down at one blow?"

"Good! But why is the place for the halt so near Skongen?"

"Because, in all the mountains, it is the only place where defense is impossible. Only those intended to figure before the judges will be allowed to come out alive."

"Marvelous! Something urges me, MUSDÆMON, to promptly terminate this business.

If everything is reassuring in one direction, all is disquieting in the other. You know that we have had secret search made for the papers which might have fallen into possession of Dispolsen."

"Well, my lord?"

"Well, I have just learned this moment that the searcher has had mysterious interviews with the cursed astrologer Cumbysulsum."

"Who died lately?"

"Yes, and that as he was dying the old sorcerer gave back to Schumacker's agent some papers."

"Damnation! He had some of my papers, showing our plan!"

"*Your* plan, Musdoemon!"

"A thousand pardons, noble count! But why did your grace put yourself in the hands of this charlatan Cumbysulsum? The old traitor!"

"Listen, Musdoemon, I am not, like you, without belief or faith. It was not without good cause, my dear fellow, that I always had confidence in the magical science of old Cumbysulsum."

"If your grace had only had as little faith in his faithfulness as confidence in his science! However, there is no need to be alarmed, my noble master. Dispolsen is dead, his papers are lost; in some days there will be no opportunity to use them if he had them."

“In any event what charge could be brought against me?”

“Or against me, protected by your grace?”

“Yes, yes, my dear fellow, you could, certainly, count on me; but hasten, I pray you, the upshot of all this; I will send the message to the colonel. Come, my men wait for me behind these bushes, and we must take the road back to Drontheim, as the Mecklenburger has no doubt left. Continue to serve me well, and, notwithstanding all the Cumby-sulsums and Dispolsens on the earth, you can count on me through life and death!”

“I beg your grace to believe.—The devil!”

Here they both disappeared into the woods, and their voices gradually died away; and soon nothing was heard but the tread of the two horses in the distance.

## XXXV.

. . . Strike up, drummers ! They are coming !

. . . They have all made vows, and have all vowed the same thing ;—not to return to Castille without the count, our prisoner ; their lord.

They have a stone statue of him in a chariot, and are determined not to turn back, unless they see he himself in place of the statue.

And as a sign that he who takes a step backward shall be looked upon as a traitor, they have all raised their hands and made a vow.

. . . . .

And they marched towards Arlançon, as fast as the beast drawing the chariot could go ; they stopped no more than the sun.

Burgos was deserted ; only the women and children remained.

They talked among themselves of horses and falcons, and shouted that Castille must be freed from the tribute she paid to Léon.

And just before entering Navarre, they met on the frontier. . . .

*Spanish Romance.*

While the conversation which we have just read was taking place in one of the forests about Smiasen, the rebels, divided into three columns, left the lead mine of Apsyl-Corh, by the principal entrance, which opened into the head of a deep ravine.

Orderer, who, in spite of his desire to be near Kennybol, had been put in the ranks of Norbith's band, could at first make out nothing but a long procession of torches, the glare from which was reflected on the axes, forks, picks, clubs, studded with iron points, enormous hammers, pikes and other tools, with which the rebels were accustomed, mingled with other arms which showed that the revolt was the result of a conspiracy; such as muskets, sabres and carbines. When the sun arose, and the light of the torches had turned into smoke, he was better able to observe the aspect of this singular army which moved forward in disorder, with rough songs and wild cries, like a pack of hungry wolves going to feast on a body. It was divided into three divisions, or at any rate into three crowds. First marched that of the Kole mountaineers, commanded by Kennybol, whom they all resembled in their costumes of beast-skins, and likewise by their rough and hardy appearance. Then came Norbith's young miners and the old ones under Jonas, with their large felt hats, wide pantaloons, arms entirely bare and black faces, whose eyes looked stupidly at the sun. Above these tumultuous bands red banners floated pell-mell, on which were different devices, such as: *Long live Schumacker ! Deliver our liberator !*

*Liberty for the miners! Liberty for Count Griffenfeld! Death to Guldenlew! Death to the oppressors! Death to d'Ahlefeld!*

The rebels, however, seemed to look upon these ensigns as much as burdens as ornaments, and passed them from hand to hand when the standard-bearers were tired or wished to join in the psalm singing or vociferous shouts of their comrades.

The rear guard of this strange army was composed of six carts drawn by reindeers and large asses, destined no doubt to carry the ammunition; and the advance guard, led by Hacket, was headed by the giant, who marched alone, armed with a club and a hatchet, and behind him came the ranks commanded by Kennybol, who kept at a good distance through terror, never took his eyes off him as though to follow the different transfiguration which his diabolical chief might wish to make.

This torrent of rebels thus descended, accompanied by a confused murmur, and filled the pine woods with the noise of trumpets used by the mountaineers of upper Drontheim. It was increased by the arrival of the different bands of Sund-Moër, Hubfallo, Königsberg, and the troop of Smiasen iron-workers, who presented an odd contrast to the rest of the rebels. They were large tall men, armed with pincers and



hammers, having as cuirass, large leather aprons and carrying no other ensign than a large wooden cross; they marched gravely and in time, with a regularity that was rather religious than military, with no other war cry than psalms and Bible songs. They had no other leader than their cross-bearer, who marched unarmed at their head.

All this mob of rebels met no other human being in its march. At their approach, the shepherd drove his flock into a cavern, and the peasants deserted their villages; for the inhabitants of the plains and valleys were all the same; they feared the bandit's trumpet as much as the archer's horn.

Thus they crossed hills and forests, following winding paths where they found more traces of wild beasts than of man, circling the ponds, crossing the torrents, the ravines and the marches. Ordener did not recognize one of these places. Once only, looking up, he noticed on the horizon the bluish outline of a large curved rock. He leaned towards one of his rough traveling companions and asked :

“My friend, what is that rock down there, in the south, to the right?”

“It is the Vulture's Neck, the rock of Oëlmœ,” answered the other.

Ordener sighed deeply.

## XXXVI.

My daughter, may God guard and bless you !

RÉGNIER.

Monkey, paroquets, combs and ribbons, were all ready at Countess d'Ahlefeld's to receive Lieutenant Frederick. She had just received the last novel of the famous Scudéry at great expense. It had, by her order, been richly bound with silver and gilt clasps, and was placed between the essence bottles and handkerchief boxes, on the elegant toilet table with the legs ornamented with inlaid woods, with which she had furnished the future boudoir of her dear son Frederick. When she had thus attended to the minute details of these maternal cares, which had up to now filled her thoughts, she thought she could think of nothing better than to annoy Schumacker and Ethel. The departure of General Levin had left them defenseless.

Many things had happened in the donjon at Munckholm in a short while, about which she had only been able to learn vague rumors.

Who was the serf, vassal, or peasant, who, to believe Frederick's ambiguous and embarrassed words, had gained the love of the ex-chancellor's daughter? What were the relations of Baron Ordener with the prisoners at Munckholm? What were the incomprehensible motives for the singular absence of Ordener at the very time when the two kingdoms were busy with the approaching marriage with Ulrica d'Ahlefeld, whom he seemed to despise? Finally, what had passed between Levin de Knud and Schumacker? The brain of the countess was full of conjectures. She finally resolved, in order to clear up these conjectures, to risk a descent to Munckholm, hoping at the same time to satisfy her woman's curiosity and her hatred for her enemies.

One evening when Ethel, alone in the garden of the donjon, had just, for the sixth time, engraved some mysterious sign upon the black post of the door where she had last seen Ordener, this door opened. The girl trembled. It was the first time that this postern had been opened since it had been closed upon her.

A tall pale woman, dressed in black, stood before her. Her smile was like poisoned honey, and there was, beneath her peaceable and kindly look, something like an expression of hate, mingled with involuntary pity and admiration.

Ethel gazed upon her with astonishment, almost with fear. Since her old nurse, who had died in her arms, this was the first woman who had ever entered the interior of Munckholm.

"My child," said the stranger softly, "you are the daughter of the prisoner of Munckholm?"

Ethel did not dare to turn her head; something about the prisoner repelled her, and there seemed to be remorse in the sound of this smooth voice. She answered:

"I am called Ethel Schumacker. My father tells me that they named me, when in my cradle, Countess of Tongsberg and Princess Wollin."

"Your father tells you that!" cried the woman in a voice which she at once altered. Then she added: "You have suffered many misfortunes."

"Misfortune received me at my birth, in its iron arms," answered the young prisoner. "My noble father says that it will only give me up to death."

A smile passed the lips of the stranger, who replied in a voice of pity.

"And you do not rebel against those who have forced you to pass your life in this cell? You do not curse the authors of your misfortune?"

“No, for fear our maledictions might make them suffer even worse than we do.”

“And,” continued the pale woman impassibly, “do you know the authors of this suffering of which you complain?”

Ethel thought a moment and said :

“All is done by the will of Heaven.”

“Your father never speaks to you of the king?”

“The king? I pray for him morning and evening without even knowing him.”

Ethel could not understand why the stranger bit her lips at this response.

“Does your father never, in his anger, name his implacable enemies, General Arensdorf, Bishop Spollyson, and Chancellor d’Ahlefeld?”

“I do not know of whom you speak.”

“And do you not know the name of Levin de Knud?”

The recollections of the scene of two days before, between the governor of Drontheim and Schumacker was too fresh in Ethel’s mind for her to have forgotten the name of Levin de Knud.

“Levin de Knud?” said she; “it seems to me that that is the man for whom my father has so much esteem and even affection.”

“What !” cried the tall woman.

"Yes," continued the young girl. "It was Levin de Knud that my father defended so vigorously the day before yesterday against the governor of Drontheim."

These words redoubled the other's surprise.

"Against the governor of Drontheim! Do not play with me, girl. It is your interests that have brought me here. Your father took the part of General Levin de Knud against the governor of Drontheim?"

"Of the general! It seems to me it was a captain.—But no, you are right.—My father," continued Ethel, "seemed to have as much regard for this General Levin de Knud as he had hate for the governor of Drontheim."

"Here is another strange mystery!" said the tall pale woman to herself, who became more and more curious. "My dear child, what then passed between your father and the governor of Drontheim?"

The questioning tired Ethel, who looked steadily at the tall woman.

"Am I a criminal that you question me thus?"

At this the unknown seemed disconcerted, as though she felt that she had made a mistake. She continued, however, in a voice slightly trembling.

"You would not speak to me thus if you knew from whom and why I come."

“What!” said Ethel, “you come from him? Do you bring me a message from him?”

And a blush spread over her face; and her heart swelled in her breast, fluttering with impatience and anxiety.

“From whom?” asked the other.

The girl stopped at the very moment she was about to pronounce the name of her adored one. She had noticed in the eye of the stranger a gleam of sinister joy like a flash from hell. She said sadly:

“You do not know he of whom I would speak.”

The expression of foiled spite for a second time appeared in the face of the other.

“Poor girl!” she cried, “what can I do for you?”

Ethel did not hear her. Her thoughts were beyond the mountains of the North, with the adventurous traveler. Her head was bowed on her breast and her hands were clasped beside it.

“Does your father hope to leave this prison?”

This question, repeated twice by the unknown, brought Ethel to herself.

“Yes,” said she.

And tears welled in her eyes.

Those of the stranger sparkled at the response.

“He hopes to! tell me! and how! By what means! When!”

“He hopes to leave this prison, because he hopes to leave this life.”

There is sometimes in the simplicity of a soft answer a force that vanquishes all the nerves of a heart hardened in wickedness. Something seemed to have touched the fine lady, for her expression suddenly changed, and, placing her cold hand on Ethel’s arm, she said :

“Listen to me,” said she in a tone almost frank ; “have you heard that your father’s days are again menaced by judicial trial ? That he is suspected of having fermented a revolt among the miners of the North?”

The words “revolt” and “trial” had no meaning to Ethel ; she turned her large dark eyes toward the unknown :

“What do you mean?”

“That your father is conspiring against the State ; that his crime is almost discovered ; that this crime entails the pain of death.”

“Death ! crime !” cried the poor child.

“Crime and death,” said the strange woman gravely.

“My father ! My noble father !” continued Ethel.



"Alas ! he who passes his days in listening to me reading the Edda and the Evangelists ! He, conspire ! What has he done to you ?"

"Do not look upon me so ; I repeat to you, I am far from being your enemy. Your father is suspected of a great crime, I warn you. Perhaps, instead of these evidences of hatred, I should have the right to gratitude."

This reproach touched Ethel.

"Oh ! pardon, noble lady ! Pardon ! Until now the only human beings we have seen have been our enemies. I have been defiant toward you ; you will pardon me for it, will you not ?"

The stranger smiled.

"What ! my daughter ! Can it be true that until to-day you have never met a friend ?"

A hot blush flamed in Ethel's cheeks. She hesitated a moment.

"Yes—God knows the truth. We have found a friend, noble lady, one only !"

"Only one !" said the tall woman precipitately. "Tell me his name, for Heaven's sake, you do not know how important it is. It is for your father's welfare. Who is this friend ?"

"I do not know," said Ethel.

The unknown grew pale.

"Is it because I wish to serve you that you play with me ? Remember that it concerns

the life of your father. Tell me, who is the friend of whom you speak?"

"Heaven knows, noble lady, that all I know of him is his name, which is Ordener."

Ethel pronounced these words with the diffidence with which one pronounces before others the name of one's love.

"Ordener! Ordener!" repeated the unknown with strange emotion, whilst her hands nervously played with the edge of her white veil. "And what is the name of his father?" she asked in a troubled voice.

"I do not know," answered the young girl. "What matters his family or his father! This Ordener, noble lady, is the most generous of men."

Alas! The accent in which this was spoken gave up Ethel's secret to the penetration of the stranger.

The stranger became calm and composed, and, without taking her eyes from the young girl, asked:

"Have you heard tell of the approaching marriage of the son of the viceroy with the daughter of the present grand chancellor, d'Ahlefeld?"

She had to repeat this question in order to bring to Ethel's mind things which did not seem to interest her.

"I believe so," was her only answer.

Her calmness, her indifferent air seemed to surprise the unknown.

"Well; and what do you think of this marriage?"

It was impossible to perceive the least alteration in Ethel's large eyes, whilst she answered:

"Truly, nothing. May their union be happy!"

"The Counts Guldenlew and d'Ahlefeld, fathers of the betrothed, are great enemies of your father."

"Then," repeated Ethel softly, "may the union of their children be happy!"

"An idea occurs to me," continued the astute unknown; "if your father's life is menaced, you might be able, on the occasion of this great marriage, to obtain his pardon from the son of the viceroy."

"May the saints reward you for all your kind interest in us, noble lady; but how could I get my prayer to the viceroy's son?"

These words were spoken with so much good faith that a gesture of astonishment escaped from the stranger.

"What! Do you not know him?"

"That powerful lord!" cried Ethel. "You forget that I have never yet crossed the threshold of this fortress."

"True indeed," murmured the tall woman, under her breath; "what did the old fool Levin tell me? She does not know him." Then raising her voice: "Not impossible, however, you must have seen the son of the viceroy, he has been here."

"That may be, noble lady; of all the men who have come here I have never seen any but he, my Ordener."

"Your Ordener!" interrupted the unknown. She continued without appearing to notice Ethel's blushes: "Do you not know a young man with noble features, graceful height, step sure and grave? His eyes are kindly and austere, his complexion as fresh as that of a young girl, his hair chestnut-brown."

"Oh!" cried poor Ethel, "it is he, my betrothed, my adored Ordener! Tell me, noble and dear lady, do you bring me some news of him? Where have you met him? He has told you that he deigns to love me, has he not? He has told you that he has all my love? Alas! an unhappy prisoner has nothing else than love. What a noble friend! Only a week ago, I saw him in this very place, with his green cloak, under which beat his generous heart, and the black plume which swung so gracefully over his fine forehead."

She did not finish. She saw the tall unknown woman grow pale and then red, and heard her cry in a thundering voice:

“Unhappy one! You love Ordener Guldenlew, the betrothed of Ulrica d’Ahlefeld, the son of your father’s mortal enemy, the viceroy of Norway!”

Ethel fell fainting.

## XXXVII.

CAUPOLICAN.—March with such precaution that the earth itself will not hear the noise of your footsteps. . . . Redouble your carefulness, my friends. . . . If we arrive without being heard, I warrant you a victory.

TUCAPEL.—Night has covered everything with her wings ; a frightful darkness envelopes the earth. We do not hear a single sentinel, we have not seen a single spy.

RINGO.—Advance !

. . . . .

TUCAPEL.—What do I hear ? Are we discovered ?

LOPE DE VEGA—*l'Araucque dompté.*

“ Tell me, Guldon Stayper, old comrade, do you know that the evening breeze begins to beat the hair of my cap smartly on my face ? ”

It was Kennybol, who, taking his gaze for a moment from the giant who marched at the head of the rebels, half turned towards one of the mountaineers whom a bend in the path had brought near him.

The latter nodded, and changed his banner from one shoulder to another, with a great

sigh. "Hum! I believe, captain, that in this cursed gorge of Black Post, where the wind rushes like a torrent, we are to have nothing warmer than a fire in a brazier."

"We can only have such a fire lest the old owls up in the rocks be wakened. I do not like owls; the horrible night when I saw the fairy Ubfem, she had the form of an owl."

"By Saint Sylvestre!" interrupted Guldon Stayper turning his head, "the angel of the wind is giving us hard blows with his wing to-night! If they follow my advice, Captain Kennybol, they will burn all the fir trees on the mountain. Besides, it would be a fine thing to see an army making war with a mountain."

"God forbid, my dear Guldon! Think of the roebucks! the falcons! and the pheasants! It is well enough to cook the game; but not to burn it."

Old Guldon began to laugh.

"Our captain is still always the same demon Kennybol, a wolf to the roebucks, a bear to the wolves, and a buffalo to the bears!"

"Are we still far from Black Post?" asked a voice among the hunters.

"Comrade," answered Kennybol, "we will enter the gorge at nightfall; just now we are at the Four Crosses."

There was a moment of silence, whilst nothing was heard but the tramp of feet, the moaning of the breeze, and the distant chant of the band of Smiasen iron-workers.

"Friend Guldon Stayper," continued Kennybol, after whistling an air of the huntsman Rollon, "you have just spent some days at Drontheim?"

"Yes, captain; our brother Georges Stayper was ill, and I took his place in his boat, so that his poor family might not die of hunger while he was dying of disease."

"And whilst you were at Drontheim did you have a chance to see the count, the prisoner—Schumacker—Gleffenhem—what is his name anyhow? At any rate, the man in whose name we rebel against the royal tax, and whose arms you bear embroidered on the large scarlet banner you carry?"

"It is heavy enough!" said Guldon. "You want to speak of the prisoner of Munckholm castle, the count?—so be it. And how do you expect, my brave captain, that I was to see him? I would have to have," said he, lowering his voice, "eyes like this demon's who marches in front of us, without, however, leaving behind the odor of sulphur that he does; eyes like this Han of Iceland who sees through walls, or the key of Queen Mab which opens all locks. There is among us now, I



am sure, only a single man who has seen the count—the prisoner of whom you speak.”

“Only one? Ah! Master Hacket? But Hacket is no longer with us. He left us to-night to return . . .”

“It is not Master Hacket that I mean, captain.”

“And who then?”

“The young man with the green cloak and black feather, who fell among us last night.”

“Well?”

“Well!” said Guldon, nearing Kennybol, “it is he who knows the count—this famous count, indeed, as well as I know you, Captain Kennybol.”

Kennybol looked at Guldon, winked his left eye and snapped his teeth, then slapping him on the shoulder gave vent to the triumphant exclamation which expresses our self-esteem when we are satisfied with our penetrations:

“I thought so!”

“Yes, captain,” continued Guldon Stayper, changing the scarlet standard to his other shoulder, “I am sure that the young man with the green cloak has seen the count—I don’t know his name, but the one we are going to fight for—in the donjon at Munckholm, and he seemed to attach no more

importance to entering the prison, than you or I would in entering a royal reserve."

"And how do you know that, brother Guldon?"

The old mountaineer seized Kennybol's arm, then, half-opening his otter skin with a precaution almost suspicious, said: "Look!"

"By my most holy patron!" cried Kennybol, "that shines like a diamond!"

It was indeed a rich diamond buckle, attached to Guldon Stayper's coarse belt.

"And it is true that they are diamonds," he continued, dropping the skirt of his coat, "it is as true as it is true that the moon is two days' march from the earth, and that the leather of my belt is made of the skin of a dead buffalo."

But Kennybol's face clouded, and had changed from astonishment to severity. He stared at the ground as he said, with a sort of savage solemnity:

"Guldon Stayper, of the village of Chol-Sœ, in the mountains of Kole, your father, Medprath Stayper, died aged two hundred years, without reproach, for it is no wrong to accidentally kill a royal buck or an elk. Guldon Stayper, you have on your gray head fifty-seven good years, which is only young for an owl. Guldon Stayper, comrade, I would much rather, for your sake, see the

diamonds of that buckle turned to grains of sand, if you did not come by it fairly,—as fairly as a royal pheasant gets a lead musket ball.”

In the delivery of this singular admonition there was something in the chief's voice that smacked of warning and forgiveness.

“As true as Captain Kennybol is the most daring hunter in Kole,” answered Guldon without emotion, “and as true that these diamonds are diamonds, I came by them fairly.”

“Truly?” answered Kennybol in the voice of mingled confidence and doubt.

“God and my patron saint know,” replied Guldon, “that one evening, when I had just directed some people who were carrying the body of an officer found on the Sands of Urchtal, the way to the Spladgest of Drontheim, about a week ago, a young man came to my boat, and said: ‘To Munckholm!’—I did not care over much about going, captain, you know a bird does not willingly fly into a cage. However, the young man seemed to have such an air of importance, he was followed by a groom who led two horses, and he spoke with such an air of authority, that I took up my oars, that is to say, my brother's oars. My good angel had willed it. On arrival, the young passenger,

after having spoken to the sergeant, who no doubt commanded the fortress, threw to me as payment—as God is my witness!—the diamond buckle which I have just shown to you, and which would have belonged to my brother George, and not to me, if, at that moment, the traveler—Heaven preserve him!—had not engaged me to make the journey which George would have made. That is the truth, Captain Kennybol.”

“Good.”

Gradually the chief’s face recovered all the serenity which it, naturally hard and severe, could, and he asked Guldon, in a cheerful voice:

“And you are sure, old comrade, that this young man was the same one who is now behind us with Norbith?”

“Sure. I am not likely to forget, even among a thousand, the face of he who has made my fortune. Besides, it is the same cloak, the same black feather.”

“I believe you, Guldon.”

“It is clear that he went to see the famous prisoner; for if it had not been for some great mystery, he would not have paid the ferryman so well; besides, he is now among us . . .”

“You are right.”

“And I imagine, captain, that the young stranger has more of the confidence of the

count than Master Hacket, who only seems of use, upon my soul, to howl like a wild cat."

Kennybol nodded his head expressively.

"Comrade, you have said just what I was about to say. I would much rather, in this business, obey this young stranger than the envoy Hacket. May Saint Sylvestre and Saint Olaus help me, if I do not believe that we are more indebted to the unknown than to the braggart Hacket for the aid of the Icelandic demon who leads us."

"Truly, captain?" asked Guldon.

Kennybol opened his mouth to answer, when he felt a hand on his shoulder. It was Norbith.

"Kennybol, we are betrayed! Gormon Woëstroem has just come from the south. The entire musketeer regiment is marching against us. The uhlans of Sleswig are at Sparbo; three companies of Danish horse dragoons are at the village of Lœvig. All along the road he saw more green jackets than bushes. We must hasten to capture Skongen; and must not stop until we get there. There, at least, we will be able to make a stand. Gormon thinks he even saw muskets glittering in the shrubbery along the gorges of Black Post."

The young chief was pale and excited, but his looks and tone of voice showed that he still retained his courage and daring.

"Impossible!" cried Kennybol.

"Certain! Certain!" said Norbith.

"But Master Hacket . . ."

"Is a traitor or a coward. Mind what I say, comrade Kennybol. Where is he, this Hacket?"

At this moment old Jonas hailed the two chiefs. Discouragement was in his features, and it was easy to see that he knew the fatal news.

The glances of the two old men, Jonas and Kennybol, met, and they began to wag their heads.

"Well! Jonas? Well! Kennybol?" said Norbith.

The old chief of the Faroe miners passed his hand slowly across his rugged brow, and answered in a low voice:

"Yes, it is too true, it is surely so. Gormon Woëstroem has seen them."

"If it is so," said Kennybol, "what will we do?"

"What will we do?" repeated Jonas.

"I advise, comrade Jonas, that we will do well to halt."

"And it would be still wiser, brother Kennybol, to retreat."

"To halt! To retreat!" cried Norbith.

"We must advance!"

The two old men turn cold and suspicious glances towards the younger.

“Advance!” said Kennybol. “And what about the musketeers of Munckholm?”

“And the Sleswig uhlans?” added Jonas.

“And the Danish dragoons?” continued Kennybol.

Norbith stamped his foot.

“And the royal tax? And my mother, who is dying of hunger and cold?”

“The devil! The royal tax!” said the miner Jonas with a sort of groan.

“What of it?” said the mountaineer Kennybol.

Jonas took Kennybol by the hand.

“Companion, you are a hunter, and have not the honor of being a ward of our glorious sovereign Christian IV. May the sainted King Olaüs, who is in heaven, deliver us from the tax!”

“Ask that favor of your sabre!” said Norbith in a savage voice.

“These daring words cost a young man little, comrade Norbith,” answered Kennybol; “but think, if we advance, all these green jackets . . .”

“It would be a fine thing for us to return to the mountains like foxes before wolves; they know our names and of our revolt; and, if we must die, I would rather have a musket ball than a gibbet rope.”

Jonas nodded approvingly.

"The devil ! The tax for our brothers ! and the gibbet for us ! Norbith is certainly right."

"Give me your hand, brave Norbith," said Kennybol, "there is danger both ways. It is better to march straight to the precipice than to fall over backwards."

"Forward ! Forward then !" cried old Jonas rattling his sabre.

Norbith grasped their hands eagerly.

"Brothers, listen ! Be as daring as I am and I will be as prudent as you. We will not halt until we arrive at Skongen ; the garrison is feeble and we will overwhelm it. Since we must do so we will pass through the gorges of the Black Post, but in perfect silence. We must pass, even if the enemy are there on guard."

"I hardly think the musketeers can have reached the bridge of Oedals, near Skongen, but what does it matter. Silence !"

"Silence ! So be it," repeated Kennybol.

"Meanwhile, Jonas," continued Norbith, "we will return to our posts. To-morrow, perhaps, we will be at Drontheim, in spite of the musketeers, the uhlans, the dragoons and all the green jackets of the south."

The three chiefs separated. Soon the password, *Silence !* passed from rank to rank, and this band of rebels, a moment before so noisy, became, in the rapidly increasing night, like



a troop of mute phantoms, wandering noiselessly about a cemetery.

Meanwhile the road they were following became narrower, and hemmed in on all sides by tall rocks, which became steeper and steeper. Just as the ruddy moon rose from a mass of rugged clouds, Kennybol leaned towards Guldon Stayper and said :

“We are about to enter the defile of the Black Post.”

Indeed, the noise of the torrent which wound its way between the two mountains was already heard, and in the midst could be seen the enormous oblong pyramid of granite, called the Black Post, standing out against the gray of the sky and the white of the snow on distant mountains, whilst the west, covered with underbrush, was bounded by the forest of Sparbo and a long amphitheatre of rocks, arranged like a giant staircase.

The rebels, forced to lengthen out their columns in the winding path between the two mountains, continued their march. They entered the gorges without torches and without noise. The sound of their footsteps was even drowned in the crash of the cascades and the moaning of the wind as it ploughed through the Druidical forests covered with ice and snow. Lost in the dark depths of the defile the moonlight did not reach the

iron of their weapons, and the white eagles which circled above did not notice that a great multitude of men disturbed these solitudes.

Once old Guldon Stayper touched Kennybol on the shoulder with the butt end of his carbine :

" Captain ! captain ! I see something behind that clump of shrubs."

" So do I," answered the chief mountaineer, " it is the waters of the torrent reflecting the clouds."

And they passed on.

Another time Guldon roughly stopped his chief.

" Look," said he, " are not these musket-barrels up there in the shadow of that rock?"

Kennybol shook his head, then after a moment's reflection : " Calm yourself, brother Guldon. It is only moonlight falling on an icicle."

Nothing to alarm them happened, and the different bands, peaceably following the windings of the defile, soon forgot all the dangers which their position offered.

After two hours of difficult marching through trunks of trees and blocks of granite with which the road was obstructed, the advance guard entered the clump of firs which ended the gorge of Black Post,

above which hung dark and forbidding rocks.

Guldon Stayper approached Kennybol, vowing that he was glad to at last be about to leave this cursed gorge, and that he must give thanks to Saint Sylvestre that the Black Post had not been fatal to them.

Kennybol began to laugh, swearing that he never had any old wife's fears; for, with most men, when peril is past, it no longer exists, and they then seek to prove the courage which they had not then been able to show.

At this moment, two little round balls of fire, like two burning coals, moving in the darkness, attracted their attention.

"Bless my soul!" said he in a low voice, grasping Guldon's arm, "there, certainly, are two fiery eyes which should belong to the finest wild cat that ever howled in a thicket."

"You are right," answered old Stayper, "and, if he was not marching in front of us, I would say they were the eyes of that cursed demon of Icel . . ."

"Ssch!" cried Kennybol.

Then, seizing his carbine:

"Truly," continued he, "it will never be said that such a fine shot was allowed to escape Kennybol."

The shot was made before Guldon Stayper, who grasped the arm of the imprudent huntsman was able to stop him. It was not a cry of a wild cat which rang out with the report of the carbine, but a frightful roar of a tiger, followed by a human laugh, more horrible still.

The shot did not die away, echo by echo, in the mountains, for the flash of the carbine had hardly gleamed in the darkness, the noise of the fatal shot had hardly broken the silence, when a multitude of formidable unexpected voices were heard in the mountains, in the gorges, and in the forests, crying, *long live the king!* loud as thunder. The cry rolled above their heads, on either side, before them and behind them. And when the terrible rattle of the musketry, on all sides, struck them and enlightened them at the same time, they saw, amidst the clouds of smoke, a battalion behind each rock, and a soldier behind each tree.

## XXXVIII.

To arms ! to arms ! Captains !

*Le Captif d' Ochali.*

Let us go back to beginning of the day just finished, and return to Skongen, where, whilst the insurgents were leaving the lead mine of Apsyl-Corh, the musketeer regiment, which we saw on the march in the thirtieth chapter of this true tale, had just arrived.

After having given several orders for the lodging of the soldiers of his command, Baron Voethaün, colonel of the musketeers, was about to enter his hotel near the town gate, when he felt a heavy hand placed familiarly on his shoulder. The colonel turned about.

It was a short man, whose features were covered with a large straw hat, leaving only a red bushy beard in sight. He was carefully wrapped in the folds of a cloak of gray drugget, which, except that no hood could be seen, seemed to have been a hermit's robe, and which hid his hands encased in large gloves.

"Well, fellow !" asked the colonel irritably, "what the devil do you want?"

"Colonel of the Munckholm musketeers," answered the man with a queer look, "follow me for a moment, I have news for you."

At this strange invitation the baron remained surprised and silent.

"Important news, colonel," repeated the man with the big gloves.

This insistence determined Baron Voethaün. In the present crisis of the province, and on the mission he was on, no information was to be disdained. "Go on," said he.

The little man walked in front of him, and when they were outside the town he stopped: "Colonel, would you like to be able to exterminate all the rebels at a single blow?"

The colonel laughed:

"That would not be a bad way of beginning the campaign."

"Well! order all your soldiers to be placed to-day in ambuscade in the gorges of Black Post, two miles from this town; the bands will camp there to-night. At the first shot you hear open fire upon them. The victory will be easy."

"Fellow, the advice is good, and I thank you. But how do you know what you tell me?"

"If you knew me, colonel, you would not ask me how it could happen that I did not know."

"Who then are you?"

The man stamped his foot.

"I did not come here to tell you that."

"Do not fear. Whoever you are the service you render me will be your safeguard. Perhaps you are one of the rebels!"

"I have refused to be one."

"Then why conceal your name, since you are a faithful subject of the king?"

"What matters it?"

The colonel wished to get further information from this singular news-bearer.

"Tell me, is it true that these brigands are commanded by the famous Han of Iceland?"

"Han of Iceland!" repeated the little man in an extraordinary voice.

The colonel repeated his question. A burst of laughter, which might have passed for a roar, was the only reply he could get. He asked several other questions about the number of the rebels and their chiefs; the little man interrupted him:

"Colonel of the Munckholm musketeers, I have said all that I am going to say. Go into ambush with all your regiment in the defiles of Black Post, and you can crush all this mob of men."

"You will not reveal to me who you are; so you deprive yourself of the gratitude of the king; but it is at least fair for Baron Voethaün to show his gratitude for the service you have rendered him."

The colonel threw his purse at the feet of the little man.

"Keep your gold, colonel," said he, "I have no need of it; and," added he, showing a large bag hung to his rope belt, "if you must have pay to kill these men I have yet, colonel, gold to give *you* in payment for their blood."

Before the colonel had recovered from the astonishment caused by the inexplicable words of this mysterious being, he had disappeared.

Baron Voethaün returned slowly, asking himself if he should follow the advice given by the man. As he was entering his hotel, he was given a letter sealed with the arms of the grand chancellor. It was indeed a message from Count d'Ahlefeld, in which the colonel found, with a surprise easy to conceive, the same news and the same counsel which he had just been given, at the town gates by the incomprehensible person with the straw hat and the great gloves.



## XXXIX.

A hundred banners were bent forward over the heads of the valiant, and blood flowed round like water, and death was held better than flight. A Saxon bard had called it a feast of the swords—a gathering of the eagles to the prey—the clashing of bills upon shield and helmet, the shouting of battle more joyful than the clamor of a bridal.

SIR WALTER SCOTT—*Ivanhoe*.

We will not undertake to describe here the horrible confusion which broke up the already disordered columns of the rebels, when the fatal volleys suddenly showed all the ragged heights and dells bristling with unexpected enemies. It would be difficult to discover whether the loud shriek, formed of a thousand cries, which rose from their thunderstruck ranks, was a cry of despair, of terror, or of rage. The terrible fire poured upon them from all sides increased every moment; and, before they were able to return a shot after the fatal one of Kennybol's, they were surrounded by such a cloud of smoke that it was

almost impossible to make out any of the musketeers, dragoons, or uhlans, who were seen moving about, like devils in a furnace.

All the bands, spread out over a mile, on a winding and tortuous path, bordered on one side by a deep torrent and on the other by a wall of rocks, which prevented all attempts to double on themselves, resembled a serpent cut in pieces, the living part squirming in their gore, trying to re-unite themselves.

When the first surprise was over, despair seemed to animate, like a common spirit, all these naturally wild and fearless men. Furious at seeing themselves crushed without defense, this crowd of brigands set up a roar as though from a single body, a clamor which drowned for a moment all the noise of their triumphant enemies; and when they saw themselves without leaders, disordered and almost without arms, they began, under a terrible fire, to climb the rocks, hanging on by their teeth and nails, over steep precipices, and swinging their hammers and iron clubs, the soldiers, so well armed, so well arranged and placed, who had not yet lost a single man, could not help an involuntary shudder of horror.

Several times some reached the summit, sometimes by bridges of the dead, sometimes by raising themselves on the shoulders of their

comrades, sticking to the rocks like snails, until they were face to face with their enemies; but hardly had they time to cry: *Liberty!* hardly time to show their black faces, convulsed with rage, than they were thrown into the abyss, dragging with them their daring companions who were hanging on to some bushes or point of rock.

The efforts of these wretches to fly or to defend themselves were in vain; all the exits of the defile were closed, all accessible points were bristling with soldiers. The most of the unfortunate rebels died biting the sand of the road, after having broken their cutlasses on a granite rock; some folding their arms, and sitting on the stones which bordered the road, waited, silent and immovable, until a bullet threw them into the torrent. Those among whom Hacket had distributed muskets, sent some chance shots towards the caverns and rocks from which the volleys poured. A tumult of voices, among which could be heard the calm commands of the officers, mingled with the rattle of the discharges, whilst a bloody vapor arose from the place of battle, whilst the torrent, white with foam, passed like an enemy between the two armies carrying off her prey of dead bodies.

But, in the first part of the action, or rather the butchery, the mountaineers of Kole,

commanded by the brave and imprudent Kennybol, had suffered the most. It is remembered that they formed the advance guard of the rebel army, and that they were in the pine woods at the end of the defile when the action commenced. Hardly had the blundering Kennybol loaded his musket than the woods were suddenly full of enemies who surrounded them with a circle of fire; whilst above them was the entire Munckholm regiment which poured upon them volley after volley of terrible musketry. In this horrible crisis, Kennybol, in despair, looked towards the mysterious giant, expecting at least an evidence of superhuman power, such as Han of Iceland was reputed to possess, but he did not see the formidable demon suddenly grow wings and fly above the combatants, pouring flames and thunderbolts upon the musketeers, neither did he see him grow to the height of the clouds and overturn a mountain on the assailants, nor stamp his foot upon the ground and thus open an abyss to swallow up the battalions in ambush. This formidable Han of Iceland recoiled just as he did at the first attack of the musketeers, and came to him with a troubled face, asking for a carbine, because, said he in an ordinary voice, at such a time his hatchet was as useless as an old wife's distaff.

Kennybol, still credulous, though somewhat astonished, gave him the musket, but with such trepidation that it almost overpowered his sense of fear of the shots all around. Still hoping for the prodigious, he expected the musket handled by Han of Iceland would become as large as a cannon, or turn into a winged dragon, shooting forth fire from its nose, eyes, and mouth. Imagine the sportsman's surprise when he saw the demon charge and fire his gun several times with less skill than he could have done himself. It was evidently useless to look for miracles; he must have recourse to ordinary means of help. His poor old comrade, Stayper, lay dead at his feet covered with wounds. The terrified mountaineers pressed one against another, little thinking by thus forming a mass they were a surer target for their enemies. Kennybol at once ordered them to disperse, to throw themselves into the nearest thicket, to conceal themselves in the brushwood, and return their enemies' fire. The mountaineers were mostly fairly armed, for they were all hunters, and they silently followed their chief's orders. In moments of danger men often lose their heads, and they willingly obey one who retains his presence of mind.

This wise measure was, however, far from assuring victory or even safety. Yet some

remained inactive, either leaning on their muskets, or lying by the side of the wounded, to meet death without firing a shot in self-defense. It may seem strange that men accustomed to hunt wild beasts should so soon lose courage, but one thing is certain, courage in some minds springs from habit, and the one who boldly faces shot will often tremble at darkness or the verge of a precipice, while others, who will attack a wild beast, or take an abyss at a bound, will fly before a salvo of artillery. It often happens that fearlessness is only habitual, and that having ceased to fear death in any form, one does not dread it.

Kennybol was surrounded by his dying comrades, although himself but slightly wounded in the left arm, while the diabolical giant simply acted as a musketeer. All at once there was evidently great confusion on the heights among the victorious troops, followed by cries of distress and agony, mingled with curses, certainly not caused by the mountaineers, who could do but little damage. Firing ceased, the smoke cleared sufficiently to show that immense blocks were rapidly falling in the midst of the soldiers, who fled in all directions down the rocks.

At this unexpected help, Kennybol turned his head;—the giant was still with them. The mountaineer was astonished, for he

expected to find that the giant, Han of Iceland, had taken flight over the rocks, and sent these huge masses down on his enemies ; but the giant was still there. It could not be the rebels, for no arms were visible, nor could any shouts of victory be heard.

Meanwhile the fire from the plateau had entirely ceased ; the woods hid the remainder of the battalion which rallied there. The rattle of the musketry died away. Kennybol, as chief, profited by this unhopèd-for aid, he gathered together his companions, and showed them the heaps of dead caused by the fall of the rocks, which continued at intervals. Then the mountaineers answered the moans of their enemies by shouts of victory ; they formed into a column, and, although slightly inconvenienced by the dying fire from the bushes, they resolved, full of new courage, to yet win their way out of the dismal defile.

The column thus formed was about to charge ; Kennybol had already given the signal with his trumpet, amid shouts of *Liberty ! Liberty ! No more tax !* when the sound of drum and cornet, sounding the charge was heard in front of them, when the battalions, reinforced by fresh soldiers appeared at a turn in the road, presenting a front bristling with pikes and bayonets. When they arrived in front of Kennybol's

columns, they halted and he who seemed to be the commander, advanced towards the mountaineers, waving a little white flag and escorted by a trumpeter.

The unexpected appearance of this troop did not disconcert Kennybol in the least. There is a point in the feeling of danger, where surprise and fear are impossible. At the first sound of the drum and cornet the old fox of Kole had stopped his companions. At the moment when the battalion appeared, he ordered all the carbines loaded and commanded the mountaineers to stand two abreast so as to present the least possible surface to the fire of the enemy. He placed himself in front, with the giant, with whom, in the heat of the fight, he had become almost familiar, having noticed that his eyes were not quite as blazing as the furnace of a forge and that his supposed claws were only long finger-nails.

When he saw the commander of the royal musketeers advance towards him as though he were going to surrender, and the firing suddenly stop, he suspended his preparations for defense.

Meanwhile the officer with the white flag arrived in the middle of the space between the two columns; he stopped, and the trumpeter who accompanied him sounded the call. Then the officer cried in a loud voice,



which the mountaineers distinctly heard despite the noise of the fight which was still kept up behind them.

"In the name of the king! The king's pardon is granted to those who throw down their arms, and give up their leaders to the sovereign justice of his majesty!"

The bearer of the flag of truce had hardly pronounced these words when a shot was heard from a neighboring coppice. The officer staggered, stepped back waving his flag and fell, crying: "Treason!"

No one knew who fired the fatal shot.

"Treason! Cowardice!" repeated the battalion of musketeers with roars of rage.

And a horrible volley of musketry terrified the mountaineers.

"Treason!" replied the mountaineers in their turn, furious at seeing their brothers fall at their sides. And a general firing answered the unexpected attack of the royal soldiers.

"Upon them! Comrades! Death to the cowards! Death!" cried the officers of the musketeers.

"Death! Death!" repeated the mountaineers, and the combatants bared their sabres and the two columns sprang forward, meeting almost on the body of the unfortunate officer, with shouts and horrible noise of arms.

The ranks mingled. Rebel chiefs, royal officers, soldiers, mountaineers; all, pellmell, striking, seizing, grasping each other, like two troops of fierce tigers meeting in a desert. The long pikes, the bayonets, and the halberds were useless; sabres and hatchets glittered above the heads; and many combatants, struggling in each other's grasp, could not use any other arms than poniards or their teeth.

An equal fury and indignation animated the mountaineers and the musketeers; the same cry of *Treason!* and *Vengeance!* rose from all. The mêlée had got to the point where ferocity enters every heart, where one prefers the death of an unknown enemy to his own life, where one tramples upon the heads of the dead and wounded; among the latter, one sometimes revives enough to bite those who trample him under foot.

It was at this moment that a little man, who, some of the combatants, seeing him at first through the smoke, in his wild beasts' skins, took for a wild animal, threw himself into their midst with horrible laughs and yells of joy.

No one knew whence he came. His stone hatchet fell with equal force on a rebel or a soldier. If he made a choice, it was in more freely crushing a Munckholm musketeer. All

fled before him. He brandished his terrible hatchet on all sides, scattering fragments of flesh, severed limbs, and broken bones. He, too, cried "*Vengeance!*" and added strange words, among which the name of Gill often occurred. To this formidable being the slaughter appeared a holiday.

A mountaineer upon whom his murderous glance fell ran and threw himself at the feet of the giant in whom Kennybol had placed so many shattered hopes, crying:

"Han of Iceland, save me!"

"Han of Iceland!" repeated the little man.

He advanced towards the giant.

"Are you Han of Iceland?" said he.

The giant by way of answer raised his iron hatchet. The little man stepped back and the weapon, in its descent, imbedded itself in the skull of the very wretch who implored the giant's aid.

"Ho! ho! By Ingulphus! I thought Han of Iceland was more adept."

"It is thus Han of Iceland saves those who implore him!" said the giant.

"You are right."

The two formidable champions attacked each other in rage. The iron hatchet and the stone hatchet met; they clashed violently and the two weapons broke into a thousand pieces.

Quicker than thought, the little man seized a heavy wooden club, left on the earth by one of the dying, and, avoiding the giant, who tried to seize him in his arms, he aimed a terrible two-handed blow and struck his colossal adversary a furious blow on the forehead.

The giant gave a muffled cry and fell. The triumphant little man kicked the body aside, overflowing with joy.

"You took a name much too heavy for you," said he.

And, brandishing his victorious club, he went to seek other victims.

The giant was not dead. The violence of the blow had stunned him, and he was almost lifeless. He was beginning to recover and to make some feeble movements when he was noticed by a musketeer, who threw himself upon him, crying :

"Han of Iceland is captured ! Victory !"

"Han of Iceland is captured !" repeated all voices in accents of triumph or distress.

The little man had disappeared.

The mountaineers had already been outnumbered for some time ; for the Munckholm musketeers had been reinforced by the detachments of dismounted uhlans and dragoons who had arrived from the interior of the gorges where the surrender of the principal chiefs had stopped the carnage. Brave

Kennybol, wounded in the beginning of the action, had been taken prisoner. The capture of Han of Iceland destroyed the remaining courage of the mountaineers. They threw down their arms.

When the first gleam of day lighted up the summits of the high glaciers, still half submerged in shadow, there remained in the defiles of Black Post only mournful repose, nothing but a frightful silence, sometimes broken by groans and the low moaning of the morning breeze. Black clouds of ravens flew towards the fatal gorge from all parts of the compass; and some poor shepherds, having passed with their flocks, returned horror-stricken to their huts vowing that they had seen a beast with a human face, drinking blood, and seated on a heap of bodies in the defile of the Black Post.

## XL.

Let those who wish suffer under these secret fires,

BRANTÔME.

"Daughter, open the window; the glass is very dull. I would like to see daylight for a little while."

"See daylight, father? Night is rapidly approaching."

"There are still some rays of the sun above the hills about the gulf. I need to breathe the free air through the bars of my cell.—The sky is so clear."

"Father, a storm is gathering behind the horizon."

"A storm, Ethel! Where do you see it?"

"It is because the sky is so clear, father, that I expect a storm."

The old man looked at the young girl in surprise.

"If I had thought of that in my youth I would not have been here."

Then he added in a less bitter tone :

“What you say is right, but is beyond your years. I do not understand how your youth knows what experience teaches my old age.”

Ethel kissed his eyes, as though troubled by this grave and simple reflection. He clasped her hands sadly, and a deep sigh rose from her breast.

“My daughter,” said the old captive, “for some days you have been as pale as though life had never warmed the blood in your veins. For several mornings you have greeted me with eyelids red and swollen, and eyes heavy with weeping. Several days, Ethel, have passed in silence, without your voice trying to make me forget the sombre thoughts of my fate. You are sadder than I am, whilst you have not, like me, the sadness of a wasted life upon your mind. Affliction surrounds your life but cannot enter your heart. The morning clouds soon disperse. You are at the period of life when one can live in dreams of the future independent of the present, whatever it be. What is the matter, then, my daughter? Thanks to this monotonous captivity you are sheltered from unforeseen misfortunes. What fault have you committed? I cannot believe that it is for me you grieve; you should have become accustomed to my irredeemable misfortune. Hope, indeed, is

no longer in my path ; but that is no reason why I should read despair in your eyes."

In speaking thus the usually severe voice of the prisoner had become almost paternal. Ethel, mute, remained standing before him. Suddenly, with an almost convulsive movement, she threw herself on the stone at his feet and hid her face in her hands, as though to hide her tears and smother the sobs which burst from her breast.

Deep sorrow filled the young girl's heart. What had she done to the fatal stranger that she had revealed the secret which destroyed all her life? Alas! Since the entire name of her Ordener was made known to her, the poor child had been unable to sleep or have any peace of mind. At night she had no other solace than that of being able to weep freely. So it had come to this! He was not for her, she to whom he belonged by all right, by all sorrow, and by all prayers; he who she believed she was to wed. For the very evening Ordener pressed her in his arms seemed now but a dream, which had repeated itself each night since he left. It was then a guilty feeling to think of the absent one. Her Ordener was affianced to another. What words can depict all she endured, tortured with jealousy, as she lay tossing to and fro during the long hours of the night, picturing her Ordener, perhaps



in the arms of another, wealthy, noble, and more beautiful than herself. "How could I fancy," murmured she, "that he would risk death for my sake? Ordener, a great lord, the viceroy's son; I nothing but a poor prisoner, the despised daughter of an outlaw. He has gone, he is free, and has, no doubt, left me, to wed his beautiful betrothed, the daughter of a chancellor, a minister, a proud count! So he deceived me! my Ordener! Oh, God! who could believe that that voice could deceive?"

The wretched Ethel wept unceasingly. Ordener was ever before her eyes; he was her god, although going to the altar with that smile for another which had been her great happiness.

The poor girl had made every effort to conceal her grief from her father. Tears that are shed are far less bitter than those which are smothered. It was some days before the old man perceived the change in his daughter, and his gentle questioning had caused her heart to overflow with grief.

The father looked at his weeping daughter for some time, with a bitter smile, and shook his head.

"Ethel," said he at last, "you who never loved a man, why do you weep?"

He had hardly finished when the noble and gentle creature rose. She had by some

unknown powers, stopped the tears in her eyes, which she wiped with her sash.

"Father," said she firmly, "my lord and father, pardon me; it was a moment of weakness."

Then she looked up at him with a forced smile. She went to the end of the room to look for the Edda and came and seated herself near her taciturn father and opened the book at hazard. Then, calming her emotion, she began to read; but her reading was unheard, either by herself or by the old man.

The latter stopped her with a gesture.

"Enough, my daughter, enough."

She closed the book.

"Ethel," added Schumacker, "do you still sometimes think of Ordener?"

The girl interrupted him, trembling.

"Yes," continued he, "of Ordener, who went . . ."

"My lord and father," interrupted Ethel, "why worry ourselves about him? I think, as you do, that he has gone never to return."

"Never to return, my daughter! I could not have said that. Some presentiment tells me, on the contrary, that he will come back."

"Such was not your opinion, my noble father, when you spoke so doubtingly of the young man."

"Did I speak doubtingly?"

"Yes, father, and I am quite of your opinion ; I think that he deceived us."

"Deceived us, my daughter ! If I had judged him so, I acted like all men who condemn without proof. I received from Ordener nothing but proofs of devotion."

"And do you know, my venerable father, that his cordial words did not hide perfidious thoughts ?"

"Ordinarily, men do not court those in misfortune and disgrace. If Ordener was not attached to me he would not then have come to my prison without an object."

"And are you sure," answered Ethel in a weak voice, "that in coming he did not have an object ?"

"And what could it be ?" asked the old man briskly.

It was too much of an effort for her to continue to accuse the well-beloved Ordener, whom she formerly defended against her father.

"I am no longer Count Griffenfeld," continued he. "I am no longer grand chancellor of Denmark and Norway, the favored dispensator of royal pardons, the all-powerful minister. I am a miserable prisoner of State, an outlaw, a pestiferous politician. It needs courage to speak of me without execration among all the men who I have loaded with

honors and riches ; it is devotion to cross the threshold of my cell, if one is not a jailer or a headsman ; it is a heroism, my daughter, not to cross one's self when calling me friend. No, I will not be ungrateful like all the human race. This young man has merited my gratitude, if only for showing me a cheerful face and letting me hear a consolatory voice."

Ethel hardly listened to these words, which would have ravished her a few days sooner, when Ordener was still in her heart, her Ordener. The old man, after having paused a moment, continued in a solemn voice :

"Listen to me, my daughter, for I am going to speak gravely. I feel myself dying slowly ; life leaves me little by little ; yes, my daughter, my end is approaching."

Ethel interrupted him by a smothered moan.

"O God, father, do not speak so ! For pity's sake, spare your poor daughter ! Alas ! are you also going to abandon her ? What will become of her, alone in the world, without your protection ?"

"An outlaw's protection !" replied her father, shaking his head. "That is what I have been thinking about. Your future happiness concerns me far more than my past misfortunes. Listen then, and do not interrupt me. Ordener does not deserve to be judged so severely. Until now I had no idea

you held him in such aversion. He looks both frank and noble. That proves nothing. But he is not without some good points. Yet he would not be a man if he were not steeped in every vice and every crime. There is never smoke without fire !”

The old man paused again, and, fixing his eyes upon his daughter, he added :

“Feeling the near approach of death, I have thought much about him and you, Ethel. Should he return, as I fully hope may be the case, I will make him your protector and your husband.”

Ethel trembled and turned pale. It was at the very time her dream of happiness had vanished forever that her father tried to compass its fulfilment. The bitter thought recurred to her, “It might have been.” The girl could not speak, lest the burning tears should fall.

The father waited.

“What !” said she at last in a strained voice, “you have chosen a husband for me, my lord and father, without knowing his family, his name ?”

“I have not chosen, my daughter, I am choosing.”

His voice was almost imperious : Ethel sighed.

“ . . . I do select him for you. What do I care about his birth ? I do not want to know

anything of his family, since I am acquainted with himself. Think well of this; it is the only anchor on which you may hope to trust. Fortunately he has not the same dislike toward you that you evince toward him."

The poor girl raised her eyes to heaven.

"Hear me, Ethel; I repeat it, what does his birth matter? He is doubtless of obscure rank, for those born in prisons are not accustomed to frequenting prisons. Yes, and do not show proud regrets, my daughter; do not forget that Ethel Schumacker is no longer Princess Wollin and Countess of Tongsberg; you have descended to the point from which your father rose. Be then happy if this man accepts your hand, no matter what his family may be. If of humble birth, so much the better; you will then at least be protected from the troubles which have beset your father's life. By changing your name you will be free from envy and hatred; your very existence will soon be ignored, and your life will end far better than it has commenced."

Ethel had fallen on her knees before the prisoner.

"O father! spare me!"

He opened his eyes in surprise.

"What do you mean, child?"

"In the name of Heaven, do not picture this happiness, it is not for me!"

"Ethel," said the old man, severely, "do not trifle with fate. I refused the hand of a royal princess—do you hear me?—a princess of Holstein-Augustenburg! My pride has been cruelly punished. You disdain a loyal-hearted man because he is of obscure origin. Tremble lest your chastisement should not be as heavy as mine."

"Would to Heaven," murmured Ethel, "that this man were obscure and loyal!"

The old man rose and paced the apartment much agitated.

"My daughter," said he, "it is your poor father who begs you and commands you. Do not, at death, leave him anxious for your future; promise to accept this stranger for a husband."

"I will obey you always, father, but do not hope for his return."

"I have weighed the chances, and I think, considering the accent with which Ordener pronounced your name . . ."

"That he loves me?" interrupted Ethel, bitterly; "oh! no, I think not."

The father continued coldly:

"I do not know, to use your girlish expression, whether he loves you; but I know he will return."

"Abandon that idea, noble father. Besides, perhaps you would not wish him for your son-in-law if you knew him."

"Ethel, he will be, whatever his name and rank."

"Well!" continued she, "if this young man, in whom you have seen a consoler, in whom you see a protector for your daughter, my lord and father, was the son of one of your mortal enemies, of the viceroy of Norway, of Count Guldenlew?"

Schumacker sprang up.

"What do you say, good God! Ordener! This Ordener!—It is impossible! . . ."

The vindictive expression of hate which gleamed in the dull eyes of the old man froze Ethel's trembling heart, who vainly regretted her imprudent speech.

The blow was struck. Schumacker remained for some moments immobile and with arms crossed; all his body trembled as though he had been on the rack, his burning eyeballs stood out in their sockets, and his gaze, fixed on the flagstones, seemed to be trying to pierce them. At last some words fell from his blue lips, pronounced in a feeble voice, as though he were dreaming.

"Ordener! Yes, that is it, Ordener Guldenlew!—Good. Come! Schumacker, old fool, open your arms to him, this loyal young man who comes to poniard you."

Suddenly he stamped his foot, and his voice thundered:



"So they have sent all their infamous race to insult me in my cell! I have already seen one d'Ahlefeld; I have almost smiled on a Guldenlew! The monsters! This Ordener owns the same spirit and the same name! Woe to me! Woe to him!"

He fell exhausted into the arm-chair, and whilst his breast swelled with long sighs, poor Ethel, shuddering with fright, wept at his feet.

"Do not cry, my girl," said he in a sinister voice, "come, oh! come to my heart."

And he pressed her in his arms.

Ethel did not know how to take this caress in a moment of rage, until he continued:

"At least, girl, you have been more far-sighted than your old father. You have not been deceived by the venomous serpent with the soft eyes. Come, let me thank you for the hatred you have shown this execrable Ordener."

Ethel shuddered at praise—alas! so little deserved.

"My lord and father," said she, "pray calm yourself."

"Promise me," said Schumacker, vehemently, "that you will ever preserve this same feeling toward that Ordener Guldenlew. Swear to me."

"God forbids swearing, father."

"Swear to it, girl," repeated Schumacker, "that you will always preserve the same feeling toward that Ordener Guldenlew."

Ethel found no difficulty in thus replying:  
"Always."

"Well said, my child. I cannot bequeath you the riches and honors of which they have deprived me, but I can transmit my hatred for them to you. Listen! They deprived me of my rank and glory, they dragged me to the scaffold in irons, loading me with every infamy, and torturing me with every pain. The wretches owed their power to me, and turned it against me. May Heaven hear me. Curse them, and all their offspring!"

He paused a moment, then stooped to embrace the poor girl, who was terrified at his imprecations.

"But tell me, my Ethel, my only hope and pride, how was your instinct keener than mine? How did you discover that this traitor bore the hated name, which is more bitter than gall to my heart? How did you learn this secret?"

She was about to answer, when the door was thrown open.

A man clothed in black entered, carrying a black stick, and wearing a burnished steel chain around his neck. He was surrounded by halberdiers, also in black.

"What do you want with me?" said the captive, sharply.

The man, without replying, unrolled a long parchment, from which hung a green seal attached by silk. He read in a loud voice:

"In the name of his majesty, our merciful lord and sovereign, Christian, king.

"It is written that Schumacker, State prisoner in the royal fortress of Munckholm, and his daughter are to follow the bearer of this said order."

Schumacker repeated his question:

"What do you want with me?"

The man in black impassibly prepared himself to read the order over again.

"That is sufficient," said the old man.

Then, rising, he signed to the astonished and terrified Ethel to follow under this dismal escort.

## XLI.

A funereal knock is heard, an abject servant of justice has just arrived at his door, and informs him he is wanted.

JOSEPH DE MAISTRE.

The shades of night had fallen, the cold wind howled around the Accursed Tower, and the very doors of the ruin of Vygla trembled on their hinges.

The wild inhabitants of the tower, the executioner and his family, were around a fire on the first floor of the tower. The flames shed a glare on their sombre faces and their scarlet clothes. There was a savage ferocity about the children's faces, resembling their father's laugh, combined with their mother's haggard expression. Their eyes and those of Bechlie were turned toward Orugix, whose fatigued and dusty appearance denoted that he had just arrived from a great distance.

"Wife, listen, children, listen. It is not to bring bad news that I have not been absent two entire days. If before another month

has passed I am not the royal executioner, may I never tie a slip-knot or wield an axe. Rejoice, my little cubs; your father will, perhaps, leave you as a heritage the scaffold of Copenhagen itself."

"Nychol," said Bechlie, "what has happened?"

"And you, my old Bohemian," replied Nychol, with his deep laugh, "rejoice also. You can soon buy some blue beads to ornament your throat, somewhat like a strangled swan's. Our engagement will soon cease; but when you see me the executioner in chief of both kingdoms, you will not refuse to break another pig with me."

"What has happened, father?" said the children. The elder was playing with a wooden horse covered with blood, the younger amusing himself with plucking a live bird that he had taken from its mother's nest.

"What is it, my children? Kill that bird, Hasper; it squeaks like an old saw. Besides, you must not be cruel. Kill it. Very little has occurred, Dame Bechlie, except that in eight days or so, ex-Chancellor Schumacker, now a prisoner at Munckholm, who was within my reach at Copenhagen, and the famous brigand of Iceland, Han of Klipstadur, will pass through my hands, perhaps on the same day."

The wandering look of the red woman became full of astonishment and curiosity.

"Schumacker! Han of Iceland! What is this, Nychol?"

"Yesterday morning, on my way to Skongen, I met a whole regiment of Munckholm musketeers, who were returning victoriously to Drontheim. I questioned one of the soldiers, who deigned to answer me, because he doubtless did not know the meaning of my red jacket and red cart. He informed me that the insurgents, hemmed in near Black Pillar, had been cut to pieces by the musketeers. You must know, Bechlie, the Bohemian, that these rebels had arisen for the sake of Schumacker, and were commanded by Han of Iceland. This constitutes a criminal charge against Han of Iceland, and high treason against Schumacker, which will lead these honorable gentlemen either to the block or the gibbet. For each of these great executions I cannot receive less than fifteen golden ducats. Besides having the greatest honor in the two kingdoms conferred on me, I shall have other privileges . . ."

"Is it possible," interrupted Bechlie, "that Han of Iceland has been captured?"

"Don't interrupt your lord and master, daughter of perdition," said the headsman.

'Yes; this famous Han of Iceland has been

taken prisoner, together with his lieutenants, some other brigand chiefs. They will bring me in twelve crowns a head, besides the sale of their bodies."

The woman and the children approached Orugix.

"What! did you see Han, father?" asked the children.

"Be quiet, children. You each cry like a rascal who declares he is innocent. Yes, I saw him. He is a giant, and he was walking with his arms crossed behind him, bound in chains. His forehead was bandaged, being wounded in the head; but I will soon cure him of that wound."

After making a horrible sign, the executioner continued:

"He was followed by four of his companions, likewise prisoners. They were all to be tried at Drontheim; likewise the ex-Grand Chancellor Schumacker. There will be a special court, the high syndic, over which the present grand chancellor will preside."

"Father, what were the other prisoners like?"

"The first two were old men—one a miner, the other a mountaineer. Both seemed disconsolate. The third was a young miner, who walked firmly along, whistling. The other—you remember, my Bechlie, the travelers who

sought shelter here on the night of the storm, about ten days ago."

"As satan remembers the day of his fall," said the woman.

"Did you remark a young man who was with that old idiot of a doctor in a big wig? The young traveler who wore a large green cloak and a hat with a black feather?"

"I can see him now before me, when he said: 'Woman, we have gold!'"

"Well, well, old woman, may I never strangle more grouse if the fourth prisoner were not the same young man. I did not see his face, certainly, as it was concealed by his plume, his hair, and his cloak; besides which, he walked with his head bent down. But the clothes, the boots, the same manner—there, I will swallow the stone gibbet of Skongen at a mouthful if that is not the same man. What do you say to that, Bechlie? Would it not be droll, if after helping this stranger to sustain life I should assist him in shortening it, and that I should prove my dexterity to him after he had enjoyed my hospitality?"

The executioner, laughing loudly for some time, then continued:

"Come, let us rejoice and drink. Yes, Bechlie, give me some of that beer, which rasps the throat as though it were made of files. Let us drink to my future advancement.



Honors and health to my lord Nychol Orugix, royal executioner in perspective. I will own to you, old sinner, that I had much trouble in getting to Nœs, in order that I might quietly hang some ignoble stealer of cabbages and endivè; but thirty-two pieces were not to be despised, and, after all, I shall not lower myself by executing merely thieves and scamps of that kind when once I have beheaded the noble count, ex-grand chancellor, and the famous demon of Iceland. So I resigned myself to my fate, and dispatched the poor wretch at Nœs, while awaiting my diploma as master royal of lofty works. Here," added he, drawing his leather purse from his knapsack, "are the thirty-two pieces that I have brought you."

At this moment a horn gave three blasts outside the tower.

"Wife!" cried Orugix, rising, "those are the high syndic's archers."

So speaking he hastened down.

He immediately returned with a large document, of which he had broken the seal.

"There," said he to the woman, "just read what the high syndic says—you who could decipher satan's conjuring box. Perhaps it is my promotion. As the court will be presided over by a grand chancellor, and the accused was a grand chancellor, none but a

royal executioner should carry out the sentence."

The woman took it, and after looking well over the parchment, read the following words aloud, while the children stared at her in stupid wonderment :

"In the name of the High Syndic of the Drontheimhus ! It is ordered that Nychol Orugix, executioner of the province, is to leave at once for Drontheim, taking with him his axe of honor, his block and black hangings."

"Is that all ?" asked the executioner, discontentedly.

"Yes, that is all," replied Bechlie.

"Executioner of the province !" muttered Orugix, between his teeth.

And he cast angry looks at the court parchment.

"Well," said he at last, "I must go. Yet I am ordered to take the axe of honor, and the black hangings. Mind, Bechlie, you see that my axe is not rusted, and that the drapery is not marked. Besides, I must not be discouraged. Perhaps I shall owe my advancement to this fine execution. Well, so much the worse for those condemned ; they will not have the satisfaction of being put to death by a royal executioner."

## XLII.

ELVIRE.—What has become of poor Sancho? He no longer appears in the town.

NUNO.—Sancho has been wise enough to put himself in hiding.

LOPE DE VEGA—*Le Meilleur alcade est le Roi.*

Count d'Ahlefeld, wearing an ample satin gown trimmed with ermine, with his judge's wig covering both head and shoulders, wearing several stars and decorations, among which was the collar of royal orders of the Elephant and the Dannebrog, in fact, in full robes as Grand Chancellor of Denmark and Norway, was walking about Countess d'Ahlefeld's room with a preoccupied air.

“Ah, it is nine o'clock. The court will soon be sitting. I must not keep them waiting, for the sentence must be passed this night, so that the execution may take place to-morrow morning, at the latest. The high syndic assured me that the headsman would be here before dawn. Elphège, have you ordered the barge to be in readiness to convey me to Munckholm?”

"My lord, it has been here at least half an hour," answered the countess, rising from her arm-chair.

"And is my litter at the door?"

"Yes, my lord."

"I must go—you say, Elphège, there is a love affair going on between Ordener Guldenlew and Schumacker's daughter?"

"They are deeply in love, I can assure you," answered the countess, with rage and contempt.

"Who could have imagined it? Yet I had my doubts."

"And I also," said the countess; "this is some of that cursed Levin's tricks!"

"That old rascal of a Mecklenburger!" muttered the chancellor. "Yes, I will certainly recommend him to Arensdorf. If I could but compass his disgrace! Listen, Elphège, an idea has struck me."

"What is it?"

"You know there are six prisoners at Munckholm waiting for judgment. Schumacker, I trust, by this time to-morrow will cease troubling us. That huge mountaineer, our false Han of Iceland, has sworn to keep up the deception to the last, fully convinced that Musdæmon, from whom he has received heavy sums of money, will help him to escape. That Musdæmon's ideas are really diabolical.

Three other prisoners are rebel chiefs. The last of the number joined the meeting at Apsyl-Corh, no one knows how. Owing to Musdœmon's precautions, he also has fallen into our hands. Musdœmon thinks he is Levin's spy. He asked for the general immediately on his arrival, and appeared much dismayed on hearing of the Mecklenburger's absence. This young man refused to answer any of Musdœmon's questions."

"My dear lord, why did you not question him yourself?" inquired the countess.

"Really, Elphège, how could I do so, with all the business I have on hand? I left it to Musdœmon, who is equally interested with myself. Besides, this man is of no importance—only some poor vagabond who will serve our purpose by representing him as Levin de Knud's agent. He was taken when in the midst of the rebels. That alone will prove there is a connivance between the Mecklenburger and Schumacker—a fact which will compass this cursed Levin's disgrace, even should an indictment against him be impossible."

"You are right, my lord."

The countess reflected a moment:

"But Baron Thorwick's fatal passion for Ethel Schumacker?"

The chancellor smoothed his brow; then suddenly he shrugged his shoulders:

"Listen, Elphège. Neither you nor I are novices in this world's ways. When Schumacker has for the second time been convicted of high treason, when this infamy has ended in his death on the scaffold, when his daughter is thus branded with her father's disgrace, and sunk to the lowest grades of society, do you believe Ordener Guldenlew will remember this childish fancy that you term passion, from hearing a young girl's foolish words, that he will hesitate for one moment between the dishonored daughter of a wretched criminal and the noble daughter of a mighty chancellor? We must judge men by ourselves, my dear; where have you ever seen a human heart act thus?"

"I trust you are right. I made a request to the syndic—do not neglect to have it ratified—that Schumacker's daughter should be present at her father's trial, and be placed near me. I am anxious to study this creature."

"All is precious that can throw any light on this affair," said the chancellor, phlegmatically. "Does any one know where Ordener is now?"

"No one knows. He is a worthy pupil of old Levin—just such another knight-errant. I think he is at Ward-Hus."

"Well, well. Our Ulrica will settle that. I forgot the court was waiting for me."

"One word more, my lord. I spoke to you yesterday, but you were so preoccupied that I could get no reply. Where is my Frederick?"

"Frederick?" said the count, covering his face with his hand.

"Yes; answer me—my Frederick! His regiment has returned to Drontheim without him. Swear to me that Frederick was not in that horrible defile of Black Pillar. Why at the mention of Frederick's name has your face so changed? I am terribly anxious about him."

The chancellor, recovering himself: "El-phège, calm yourself. I vow he was not at the Black Pillar. Besides, the lists of killed and wounded have been published."

"Yes; I now feel reassured," replied the countess. "Only two officers were killed—Captain Lory and young Baron Randmer, who was my poor Frederick's companion in all his follies at the Copenhagen balls. Oh, I read the list most carefully, I assure you. Tell me, my lord, is my son then still at Walhstrom?"

"Yes, he is there," answered the count.

"Well, then, dear," said the mother, tenderly, "I have one favor to ask—will you see that my Frederick soon returns from that awful country?"

The chancellor, with difficulty disengaging himself from her arms: "Madame," said he,

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“the court is waiting for me. Adieu. What you require does not depend on me.”

And he left her abruptly.

The countess remained gloomy and thoughtful.

“It does not depend on him!” she exclaimed, softly. “One word from him would give me back my son. I have always thought so, that man is truly wicked.”



### XLIII.

Is it thus that a man of my importance is treated? Is it thus that we neglect the respect due to justice?

CALDERON—*Louis Perez de Galice.*

On leaving the dungeon of the Lion of Sleswig, the guards separated the trembling Ethel from her father, and led her through dark passages altogether unknown to her, until they came to a gloomy cell, which she entered, and the door was closed upon her. On the opposite side was a large open grating, through which the light from the torches gleamed on a woman veiled and dressed in black, who was seated on a bench in front of the opening, and making signs to Ethel to take a seat beside her. Ethel, thunderstruck, obeyed in silence.

She gazed through the open grill upon the most solemn and imposing scene before her.

At the end of a hall, draped in black, and faintly lighted by means of brass lamps suspended from the ceiling, was a table, shaped

like a horseshoe, around which seven judges in black gowns were seated. The one in the centre occupied a raised seat, and was decorated with diamond collars and glittering gold stars. The judge at the right of the centre wore a white scarf and ermine cloak—his badge of office as high syndic of the province. On a platform, over which a dais was spread, to the right of the bench, sat an old man in black pontifical vestments. To the left was a table covered with papers, behind which stood a short man, with an enormous wig, who was enveloped in the folds of a long black gown.

Facing the judges was a wooden bench, surrounded by halberdiers bearing torches, the light of which was reflected by a forest of pikes and muskets on a crowd of spectators, pressing against the iron grill which separated them from the court.

All this to Ethel seemed but a dream; whilst she was far from being indifferent to the result. Some inward voice warned her that a crisis in her life was at hand. She was a prey to different feelings—either to know at once the reason of her interest in this scene, or not to know it at all. For some days she had had the idea that Ordener was lost to her forever; so what had life to offer? She sought only to know the end of fate. Feeling that the decisive moment had now arrived, she

dwelt on the spectacle before her less with repugnance than with a sort of feverish but mournful joy.

The president arose, proclaiming, in the name of the king, that the court of justice was open.

She heard a little man in black, to the left of the bench, read in a low and rapid voice a long discourse, wherein her father's name was mingled with the words *conspiracy, revolt of the miners and high treason*. Then she remembered the strange woman's fatal words in the tower garden, telling her of the accusation which threatened her father. Ethel shuddered on hearing the man in black wind up his discourse with the word *death*, forcibly pronounced.

Terrified, she turned toward the woman, whom she instinctively feared.

"Where are we? what is the meaning of all this?" she timidly inquired.

A gesture from her mysterious companion enjoined her to silence and attention. She turned her attention to the court.

The venerable man in episcopal vestments had just risen, and Ethel recoiled at these words, so distinctly pronounced :

"In the name of almighty and merciful God, I, Pamphile-Eleuthere, bishop of the loyal town of Drontheim, in the royal

province of the Drontheimhus, bow before this honored court which judges in the name of the king, our lord next to the God.

“And I say, seeing that the prisoners now before this court are men and Christians, having no counsel, it is my intention, honored judges, to lend them all the assistance in my power in the cruel position in which it is God’s will to place them.

“Praying the Almighty to give strength to our weakness and light to our blindness.

“Thus it is that I, bishop of this royal diocese, bow to this honored and judicial court.”

After having thus spoken, the bishop left his episcopal throne, and seated himself on the prisoners’ wooden bench, amid the applause of the people.

The president arose, and said in a harsh tone:

“Halberdiers, make silence! My lord bishop, in the name of the prisoners, the court begs to thank your reverence. People of the Drontheimhus, listen. The judgment will be given without appeal in this royal high court of justice. Archers, bring in the prisoners.”

There was a dead silence throughout. Only all present moved their heads about in expectation, like the heavy waves of a stormy sea when thunder is at hand.

Soon Ethel could hear a dull sound of some extraordinary movement taking place in the passages beneath her. The audience trembled with impatience and curiosity. The steps came nearer; halberds and muskets glittered; and then six men, in chains, bareheaded, and surrounded by guards, were brought into the middle of the court. Ethel saw but one, an old gray-bearded man in a black simarre—her father.

She fell forward against the stone partition before which she was seated; everything swam before her eyes; and it seemed that she could hear her very heart beating. She feebly murmured:

“Oh, God! help me!”

The veiled woman leaned towards her and made her inhale some salts, to arouse her from her lethargy.

“Noble lady,” were her first words, “pray speak to me, that I may know I am not the sport of hellish phantoms.”

The stranger was deaf to her entreaties, and turned silently toward the court. And poor Ethel, now feeling slightly better, could but imitate her reserve.

The president had risen, and had said in slow and solemn tones:

“Prisoners, you are brought before us to judge whether you are guilty of high treason,

conspiracy, and in bearing arms against our noble sovereign. Consider the matter well, for an accusation of leze-majesty is made against you."

At this moment the light fell on one of the prisoners, who, with head bent down, endeavored to conceal his face beneath his long, curling hair. Ethel felt a cold shudder run through her frame; she fancied she recognized . . . But no, it could only be some illusion. The hall was so faintly lighted that men themselves looked only like shadows; the large crucifix of polished ebony over the president's chair was scarcely discernible.

Yet Ethel could see from the distance that this young man's cloak was green, his hair brown, and the faint glimpse of his features made her fancy . . . But no, it was not, it could not be! It was a horrible illusion.

The prisoners were all seated on a bench where the bishop had sat down. Schumacker was at one end. He was separated from the young man with the brown hair by his four companions in misfortune, among whom was a kind of giant, who, like his three neighbors, was roughly clad. The bishop was seated at the other end of the bench.

Ethel saw the president turn toward her father.

"Old man," said he, harshly, "what is your name, and who are you?"

The old man raised his venerable head.

"Formerly," he firmly replied, looking at the president, "I was called Count of Griffenfeld and of Tongsberg; Prince of Wollin; Prince of the Holy Empire; Knight of the Royal Order of the Elephant; Knight of the Royal Order of Dannebrog; Knight of the Golden Fleece of Germany; Knight of the Garter of England; Prime Minister; Inspector-General of the Universities; Grand Chancellor of Denmark; and . . ."

The president interrupted him.

"Accused, you were not asked what your name was, nor what you were, but you are requested to say what you are called, and what you are."

"Well, then," quickly replied the old man, "I am called John Schumacker, aged sixty-nine, and I am nothing more than your old benefactor, Chancellor d'Ahlefeld."

The president appeared thunderstruck.

"I recognized you, my lord count," added the ex-grand chancellor; "and as you did not appear to be equally mindful of me, I have taken the liberty of recalling to your grace that we are old acquaintances."

"Schumacker," exclaimed the president, in a tone of concentrated anger, "you are trespassing on the court's time."

The old captive again interrupted:

"We have changed places, noble chancellor. Formerly it was I who simply called you *d'Ahlefeld*, and you addressed me as *my lord count*."

"Accused, you are only damaging your cause by alluding to the infamy for which you have already been convicted."

"If the judgment was infamous for any one, Count d'Ahlefeld, it was certainly not for me."

The aged captive had risen while pronouncing these forcible words. The president extended his hand.

"Sit down. Do not insult the court, the judges who have condemned you, and the king who has appointed these judges. Remember, the king deigned to spare your life. And confine yourself to your own defense."

Schumacker's only response was in shrugging his shoulders.

"Have you," asked the president, "any confession to make concerning the crime of which you are accused?"

Seeing that Schumacker remained silent, the president repeated the question.

"Are you addressing yourself to me?" said the ex-chancellor. "I thought, noble Count d'Ahlefeld, that you were speaking to yourself. What crime do you hold against me? Have I ever given an Iscariot kiss to a friend?"



Have I ever imprisoned, condemned or dishonored a benefactor? him who I owed all, have I ever stripped of all? I am at a loss to know, my lord chancellor in office, why I have been brought here. Doubtless to prove your ability in causing the heads of the innocent to fall. In fact I shall not be sorry to be able to judge, if you can compass my ruin equally as well as you are now ruining the country, and if a stroke of your pen will effect my death, as one letter of the alphabet was sufficient to provoke war with Sweden."<sup>11</sup>

He had hardly finished this bitter tirade when the man seated before the table to the left arose.

"My lord president, and you, my lords," said he, after bowing profoundly to the judges, "I demand that John Schumacker shall be silenced, if he continues thus to insult his grace, the president of this honored court."

The calm voice of the bishop was heard:

"Master Private Secretary, an accused cannot be denied a hearing."

"You are right, reverend bishop," exclaimed the president, hastily. "Our intention is to give full liberty to the defense. For the sake of his own interest, I should advise the prisoner to moderate his language."

Schumacker shook his head, and said coolly:

"It seems Count d'Ahlefeld is surer of his case than in 1677."

"Silence," said the president, hastening to address the next prisoner, by asking his name.

It was a huge mountaineer, with his forehead bandaged, who rose, saying:

"I am Han, of Klipstadur, in Iceland."

A shudder ran through the crowd, and Schumacker, whose head had fallen forward, darted a quick glance at his formidable neighbor, from whom the other prisoners kept aloof.

"Han of Iceland," asked the president, when the terror had somewhat subsided, "what have you to say to the court?"

Of all the spectators, Ethel was no less struck with the appearance of this famous brigand, who had so long filled her imagination. Terrified, she looked with horror on this immense giant, a murderer, to whom her Ordener had perhaps fallen a victim. She was so pursued with this and other painful ideas, that she scarcely heard Han of Iceland's coarse and embarrassed reply, except when he declared himself chief of the rebel bands.

"Did you offer yourself," asked the president, "or were you instigated by any stranger to take the command of the rebels?"

The brigand replied:

"I did not offer myself."

"Who suggested this crime?"

"A man called Hacket."

"Who was this Hacket?"

"An agent of Schumacker's, who called him 'Count of Griffenfeld.'"

The president turned to Schumacker :

"Schumacker, do you know this Hacket?"

"You have forestalled me, Count d'Ahlefeld," answered the old man. "I was about to ask you the same question."

"John Schumacker," said the president, "hatred is a bad counselor. The court will know how to appreciate your defense."

The bishop's voice was again heard :

"Master Clerk of the Court," said he, turning toward the private secretary, the short man who seemed to be both recorder and prosecutor, "is this Hacket one of my clients?"

"No, your reverence," answered the secretary.

"Is it known what has become of him?"

"We were not able to capture him. He has disappeared."

It was noticed that the secretary's voice seemed strained.

"I should say he has faded away altogether," interposed Schumacker.

The bishop continued :

"Has good search been made for this Hacket? Has any description been given of him, Master Clerk of the Court?"

Before the clerk could reply, one of the prisoners rose, a proud and severe looking young miner.

"You can easily have that," said he, in a loud tone. "This villain, Hacket, Schumacker's agent, is a short man, with an open-looking face, open as the jaws of hell. Indeed, my lord bishop, his voice sounded very much like that of his lordship who is writing at that table, and whom your reverence calls *private secretary*. If this hall were less dark, and the gentleman there had less hair about his face, I am certain he would very much resemble that traitor, Hacket himself."

"Our brother is right," cried the two comrades of the young miner.

"So, indeed!" muttered Schumacker, triumphantly.

The secretary shuddered involuntarily, either from fear or with indignation at thus being compared to Hacket. The president also looked annoyed, and hastened to say:

"Prisoners, do not forget that you should be silent until you are questioned, and do not attempt to insult a minister of justice by such degrading comparisons."

"But, my lord president," interposed the bishop, "this is only a question of identity. If there are some points of resemblance between the clerk and the culprit Hacket, all this might be of service."

The president interrupted him :

"Han of Iceland, you have had much to do with Hacket. Tell us, just to satisfy his reverence, say if he resembles our honored private secretary."

"Not in the least," replied the giant, unhesitatingly.

"There, my lord bishop," added the president.

The bishop signified his satisfaction, and the president then questioned another prisoner in the usual way.

"What is your name?"

"Wilfred Kennybol from the Kole Mountains."

"Were you one of the rebels?"

"Yes, my lord. Truth is worth more than life. I was taken prisoner in the cursed gorges of Black Pillar. I was chief of the mountaineers."

"Did you incite any men to rebellion?"

"Our brothers, the miners arose on account of the royal tax, because the government would not listen to their complaints. If you had only a mud hut and two old foxes' skins

you surely would like to be master of them. Well, my lord, when the miners determined to revolt they asked us to join them. So small a service could scarcely be refused between brothers who repeat the same prayers and invoke the same saints. That is all."

"Did no one ferment, encourage, and lead on this insurrection?" said the president.

"A Master Hacket, who was always talking of releasing a prisoner at Munckholm, a count, whose agent he declared himself to be. We promised to do so. It little mattered to us if we set one person or more at liberty."

"Was not this count called Schumacker, or Griffenfeld?"

"Just so, your lordship."

"Did you ever see him?"

"No, my lord; but if the old man who gave himself such a number of names just now is he, I must allow . . ."

"What?" interrupted the president.

"That he has a splendid white beard, almost as good as that of the father of the husband of my sister Maase, of the hamlet of Surb, who lived till he was a hundred and twenty years old."

It was impossible to see in this gloomy hall if the mountaineer's reply was disappointing to the president. He quickly ordered the

archers to display the scarlet banners before the court.

"Wilfred Kennybol," said he, "do you recognize these banners?"

"Yes; they were handed to us by Hacket, who also, in Count Schumacker's name, sent arms to the miners. We mountaineers did not want them, as we live by our carbine and game bag. I, my lord, here fastened like a fowl ready for roasting, have aimed, from the depths of the valley, at an old eagle, and brought him down from his loftiest flight, though he seemed but a sparrow or thrush when high up in the air."

"You hear, my lords," observed the private secretary, addressing the judges: "the prisoner Schumacker, through his agent Hacket, sent both arms and banners to the rebels."

"Kennybol, have you anything further to say?" inquired the president.

"Nothing. Only I do not deserve death. I only assisted the miners; and I can assure your lordships that, old sportsman that I am, I never fired on one of the king's deer."

The president, without replying to this plea, hastened to question Kennybol's two companions, both chiefs of the miners. Jonas, the elder, but repeated what Kennybol had said. The younger man was the same who had remarked the resemblance between the

clerk of the court and the treacherous Hacket. This was Norbith, who proudly owned his share in the revolt, but refused to answer any questions relating to Hacket or Schumacker. He said he had sworn to be silent, and he must keep his oath; and, notwithstanding threats and remonstrances, he remained firm. He said he had not rebelled for Schumacker, but for his mother's sake, who was perishing from cold and hunger. He might have deserved death, but it would be an act of injustice to condemn him, as it would also kill his poor mother, who did not merit it.

When Norbith ceased speaking the clerk of the court summed up in a few words, dwelling on the fearful charges brought against the prisoners, particularly against Schumacker. He then read some of the seditious devices on the banners; he pointed out how the ex-chancellor's accomplices all agreed in their replies, even young Norbith's silence, though tied by his oath, was condemnatory. "There remains one more prisoner to question," said he. "We have every reason to believe that he is a secret agent of the one who has watched so badly over the peace of the Drontheimhus. Even were he guiltless of connivance, his fatal negligence has favored this rebellion, cost the lives of these unfortunate



men, and sent Schumacker to the scaffold, from which he was previously so generously saved by the king's clemency."

To Ethel's fears for Ordener was now added the horror of her father's doom, as she listened to these terrible words. The poor girl wept bitterly, while her father arose, and calmly said: "Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, I am lost in admiration at your ingenuity. Have you already requested the executioner to be in attendance?"

Ethel thought no grief could touch her now, but she soon realized that she was deceived.

The sixth prisoner had just risen; noble and superb, he had brushed back the hair which covered his face, and to the questions addressed to him by the president he answered in a firm and distinct tone,

"I am Ordener Guldenlew, Baron of Thorwick, Knight of Dannebrog."

A cry of amazement was heard from the private secretary:

"The viceroy's son!"

"The viceroy's son!" echoed all voices as if the hall had a hundred echoes.

The president fell back in his chair, the judges leaned toward one another, looking like trees blown by a contrary wind. But the agitation was far greater among the audience. Some mounted the stone copings,

others rushed to the iron gratings, one continual murmur ran throughout the court. The guards broke through their enforced silence, and added to the universal clamor by their ejaculations.

How can Ethel's mingled feelings of joy and grief be depicted. Ordener stood before her ; she could gaze on him, while he knew not she was present. Her well-beloved was there—her Ordener, whom she thought dead. He was lost to her. This friend had deceived her, and yet, with all this, she adored him still. This was no mere delusion, but Ordener himself, whom she had more frequently seen in her dreams than in reality. Was he there as a guardian angel, or an evil genius? May she rest her hopes on him, or must she tremble for his safety? Before the spectators heard his name Ethel recognized him at once, and this knowledge, combined with other feelings, completely overpowered her.

The poor girl fainted, sinking like a flame that is extinguished by too much fuel.

She soon recovered a second time, thanks to the care of the mysterious stranger. Her first glance was turned toward the young man, who still remained standing. He alone was calm amid the general clamor. When order was restored the words Ordener Guldenlew still rang in her ears. Ethel was grieved

to see his arm in a sling, his cloak much torn, his trusty sword gone. Added to this, he was manacled. Nothing escaped her loving eyes. She could not clasp him to her, but her soul was filled with his image; and it must be said, to love's honor and shame, that in that very hall, which contained her father and her father's persecutors, Ethel saw but one man.

Silence was gradually established. The president proceeded in his duty of questioning the viceroy's son :

"My lord baron . . . " said he, in trembling accents.

"I am not termed here *my lord baron*, but simply Ordener Guldenlew, just as the former Count of Griffenfeld is now called John Schumacker."

The president remained a moment as though thunderstruck.

"Well, then, Ordener Guldenlew," added he, "doubtless it is by some mischance that you are placed in this position. You were traveling, and were taken prisoner by the rebels, who compelled you to join them, which would account for your being found in their ranks."

The secretary arose, saying :

"Noble judges, the name alone of the son of the Viceroy of Norway is quite sufficient

plea. Baron Ordener Guldenlew cannot be a rebel. Our illustrious president has clearly explained the reason of his arrest. The noble prisoner has been to blame for concealing his name. We must demand his immediate liberation, and that all proceedings should cease against him. We must express our regret that he should have occupied the same bench as that criminal Schumacker and his accomplices."

"What are you saying?" cried Ordener.

"The secretary, our public prosecutor, desists from all further proceedings against you," replied the president.

"He is in error, then," said Ordener, in a firm and distinct tone. "I alone ought to be accused, judged, and condemned." He hesitated a moment, and then added in a tone less firm, "For I alone am guilty."

"Guilty alone!" cried the president.

"Guilty alone!" repeated the private secretary.

The audience burst forth in exclamations of surprise. Wretched Ethel shuddered at this confession, which brought death in its train for her Ordener, forgetful that by this means her father's life was saved.

"Halberdiere, make silence," cried the president, trying to gather his ideas together

and regain his presence of mind. "Orderer Guldenlew, explain yourself," said he.

The young man was lost in thought. He aroused himself with a deep sigh, then arose, and calmly replied:

"Yes, an infamous death awaits me—I, who had life before me in all its glory and happiness; but God knows the heart's secret truly, God alone. I have one great duty to perform, for which my blood and honor may be sacrificed; but I feel no remorse, and I shall die without repentance. Let your lordships not be surprised. There are mysteries in the human soul which you cannot fathom. Heaven alone can be their judge. Harken to my words! Act toward me as your conscience dictates, but pardon these unfortunate men, more particularly Schumacker, who has already suffered for more crimes than any one man could commit. Yes, my noble judges, I am guilty, and the only guilty party. Schumacker is innocent; the other unfortunates were simply misled. The promoter of this rebellion was myself."

"You!" exclaimed the astonished president and private secretary.

"I! and interrupt me no more, my lords. I am anxious to end matters and complete my own accusation, in order to justify these men. I instigated the miners to revolt in

Schumacker's name. I distributed banners, gold, and arms in the Munckholm prisoner's name. Hacket was my agent."

At the mention of *Hacket* the clerk of the court looked completely stupefied.

Orderer continued :

"I will spare your time, my lords. I was taken in the midst of the miners, whom I had incited to rebel. I accomplished all without adherents. It is now for you to judge whether my crime admits of no denial; if so, then the proof is clear that Schumacker is innocent; and likewise the poor creatures you term his accomplices."

Thus saying, the young man raised his eyes to heaven. Ethel was breathless with suspense. She had noticed how bitterly Orderer had mentioned her father's name, although he was trying to justify him. All seemed inexplicable to her, except the sense of impending misfortune, which she so clearly realized.

The president was evidently struck with the same feeling. It might have been said that he could not believe his ears. He nevertheless addressed the son of the viceroy :

"If you alone are the only promoter of this rebellion, what motives had you for taking such a step?"

"I cannot say."

Ethel shuddered when she heard the president continue in an almost irritated voice:

"Did you not carry on an intrigue with Schumacker's daughter?"

Ordener, looking straight at the bench, indignantly exclaimed:

"Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, be content with my life, which I give to you, and do not forget the respect you owe to a noble and innocent girl. Do not attempt to degrade her a second time!"

The poor girl flushed at the words *a second time*, although she knew not why her defender lay such stress on them. The president clearly showed he understood them.

"Ordener Guldenlew, do not forget to respect the king's court of justice and the chief officials of the same. In the name of the bench, I reprimand you. I request you to confess the motive which impelled you to commit the crime of which you now accuse yourself."

"I must repeat, I cannot tell you."

"Was it not for Schumacker's deliverance?" inquired the clerk.

Ordener remained silent.

"It is useless for you to maintain this reserve, prisoner Ordener, for it has been proved that you were in communication with Schumacker," said the president. "This

confession of yours in no way justifies him, but simply adds to his guilt. You went often to Munckholm. You must have had a wonderful attraction there, the proof of which is this diamond buckle."

The president took from his desk a diamond buckle and showed it to Ordener.

"Do you recognize that as having belonged to you?"

"Yes. By what chance . . . ?"

"Well! a dying rebel gave it to our secretary, saying you had given it to him as payment for rowing you from Drontheim port to Munckholm fortress. Now, I would ask your lordships, would Ordener Guldenlew give such a reward to a simple boatman if it were not a matter of vital importance for him to visit Schumacker's prison?"

"Ah," said the prisoner Kennybol, "his lordship is right. My poor comrade, Guldon Stayper, said the same, and I recognize this buckle as the one he had in his possession."

"Silence," cried the president. "It is for Ordener Guldenlew to speak."

"I do not deny I was anxious to see Schumacker. But as for the buckle, that says nothing. Diamonds are not allowed in the fortress. The boatman, while crossing, complained of his poverty. I threw him this buckle, which I could not retain myself."



"Pardon me, my lord," interrupted the secretary, "this rule excepts the viceroy's son. You could then . . ."

"I did not wish to be known."

"Why?" said the president.

"That I cannot say."

"The very fact of your complete understanding with Schumacker and his daughter proves the object of your plot was their deliverance."

Schumacker, who had occasionally disdainfully shrugged his shoulders during this time, now arose, saying:

"Deliver me! Why, the object of this infernal plot is to compromise and ruin me. Do you imagine Ordener Guldenlew would have admitted his share in this crime had he not been found in the midst of the rebels? I can plainly see he has inherited his father's hatred for me. As for any understanding he had with myself and daughter, let this cursed Guldenlew know that my daughter has inherited my hatred for him, and the whole race of the Guldenlews and of the d'Ahlefelds."

Ordener sighed deeply, whilst Ethel murmured a denial. Schumacker took his seat, trembling with passion.

"The court will decide," said the president.

While Schumacker was speaking, Ordener never raised his eyes. He recovered himself, and again addressed the court.

"Oh, noble judges, hear me. Well weigh the case. Remember Ordener Guldenlew alone is guilty. Schumacker is innocent, and the other unfortunate men were but tools of Hacket, my agent. I compassed all the rest."

Kennybol interrupted him:

"Most noble judges, I can vouch for the truth of his lordship's words. He confided the secret of his journey to me, at my brother Braall's house in the hamlet of Surb. He was then on his way to Walderhog Cave, in search of Han of Iceland, hoping to make him our chief. Naming him, will not I hope bring me bad luck. What the young master says is true—that we were led on by that cursed Hacket. This proves that we do not deserve death."

"Master private secretary," said the president, "the debate has closed. What is your judgment?"

The clerk stroked his lace bands, bowed to the court, and, with his eyes fixed on the president, pronounced the following words in a solemn tone:

"My lord president, most honored judges! the prosecution is victorious. Ordener Guldenlew has forever tarnished his glorious

name by proving his own guilt, without establishing the ex-chancellor's innocence, or those of his accomplices, Han of Iceland, Wilfred Kannybol, Jonas and Norbith. I call upon you to declare the six prisoners guilty of high treason and conspiracy in the first degree."

A murmur went through the crowd; the president was about to close the case, when the bishop claimed a moment's attention.

"Learned judges, it is but right that the prisoners' defense should be heard last. Would that they had a more able advocate, for I am old and feeble. What power remains to me I owe to God's mercy. I am surprised at the clerk of the court's stern request. There is nothing proved against my client Schumacker. He can in no way be associated with the miners' rebellion, since my other client, Ordener Guldenlew, declares that he made use of Schumacker's name as a watchword for this purpose. Moreover, he, Ordener Guldenlew, confesses that he alone is guilty of this reprehensible sedition. There is no evidence against Schumacker, and his case should be dismissed. The other prisoners have only been misguided. I therefore recommend them to mercy. They are but like the wandering sheep of the Good Shepherd. And even young Ordener Guldenlew possesses one great merit in the eyes of the

Lord—he confesses his crime. My lords, I pray you, consider that he is at an age when men are apt to stray and sometimes fall, yet God never forsakes them, nor fails to send them help in the time of trouble. Ordener Guldenlew has scarcely attained a fourth of the years which now bear me down. In passing sentence upon him take into consideration his youth and inexperience, and judge not that the life, so lately given him, must be forfeited.”

The old man ceased, and again resumed his seat near Ordener, who greeted him with a smile, whilst the judges, at the president's invitation, retired to consider their verdict.

The prisoners, guarded by halberdiers, sat quietly throughout the time their fate was being decided. Schumacker remained with his head bent down, lost in thought; the giant looked from right to left with silly assurance; Jonas and Kennybol held their hands clasped in prayer. Norbith, from time to time, stamped the ground, and clanked his chains. Between him and the venerable bishop sat Ordener, his arms crossed, his eyes raised heavenward, listening to his reverence reciting the penitential psalms.

From behind them was heard the noise of the crowd giving vent to their feelings the

moment the judges left. There was the famous captive of Munckholm, the fearful demon of Iceland ; but, above all others, the viceroy's son was the centre of attraction. Amid the confusion of voices, some expressed pity, others only laughter ; and the sounds arose and fell like flames driven by the wind.

The long night hours passed, and the judges still continued their deliberations ; the sentinels paced up and down before the door like two mute phantoms.

At last torches and lamps began to pale and the first rays of the dawn appeared when, amid breathless silence, the president, followed by the judges, resumed their seats on the bench.

The clerk of the court during their absence seemed buried in thought, but on their return he bowed, and then again addressed them.

“ My lord president, what is the result of the judgment which has been passed in the name of the king, without appeal ? We are prepared to listen to it with a religious respect.”

The judge to the right of the president arose, holding a parchment before him.

“ His grace, our noble president, fatigued by the length of the trial, has deputed me, the High Syndic of the Drontheimhus, who

presides over this court, to pass the verdict which has been drawn in the king's name. We are about to fulfil this painful though honorable duty. We must request the audience to keep silent while the king's just sentence is passed."

Then, the high syndic pronounced the following words in a forcible and solemn manner, whilst all hearts beat rapidly :

"In the name of our respected master and legitimate lord, Christian, king ! This verdict is given by us, the judges of the High Court of Justice of the Drontheimhus. We have acted to the best of our belief concerning John Schumacker, State prisoner ; Wilfred Kennybol, Kole mountaineer ; Jonas and Norbith, royal miners ; Han, of Klipstadur, in Iceland ; Ordener Guldenlew, Baron of Thorwick, Knight of Dannebrog ; all accused of high treason and leze-majesty in the first degree. Han of Iceland, further accused of assassination, incendiarism, and brigandage.

"1. John Schumacker—not guilty.

"2. Wilfred Kennybol, Jonas and Norbith—guilty. But they are recommended to mercy, as they were misled.

"3. Han of Iceland is guilty of high treason and leze-majesty in the first degree.

"4. Ordener Guldenlew is guilty of high treason and leze-majesty in the first degree."

The judge paused to take snuff. Ordener gave him a glance of celestial joy.

“John Schumacker, the court absolves you of all participation in this crime and sends you back to your prison.

“Kennybol, Jonas and Norbith, your sentence is reduced to imprisonment for life, and a fine of a thousand crowns each.

“Han of Klipstadur, assassin and incendiary, you will be taken this evening on to the parade at Munckholm, and hanged by the neck until death follows.

“Ordener Guldenlew, traitor, you will be stripped of every rank in the presence of this court, you will be conducted to this same parade, carrying a torch in your hand, where your head will be severed, your body burned, your ashes cast to the winds, your head placed on a pole.

“All may now retire. Such is the sentence rendered by the king’s justice.”

The high syndic had scarcely finished his funereal discourse, when a piercing cry rang through the court which struck the hearers with greater horror than the judgment itself. The condemned Ordener looked both calm and bright, but at this fearful sound his face became of an ashen hue.

## XLIV.

Misfortune makes all equals.

CHARLES NODIER.

The judgment has been given, and nothing now remains but the final stroke to fall. The young man's noble conspiracy has succeeded, his well-beloved will be safe under her father's protection, for Schumacker's life has been saved at the expense of his own.

Let those who have considered this generous Ordener guilty or mad, judge him now, he, who joined the rebels solely to frustrate the plot against Schumacker ; and if powerless to do so, determined to spare him all punishment by taking everything on his own head.

"Alas," thought he, "Schumacker is doubtless guilty, but his long captivity and misfortunes drove him to the crime. Under the circumstance, even such a deed is pardonable. He longed for freedom, and incited this rebellion in order to compass his end. What a fate for my Ethel, if her father were to lose his life on the scaffold. Another



disgrace added to her sorrows, without protection, without assistance; either to remain alone in her captivity, or to wander in the midst of a crowd of enemies." It was this that made him gladly take the accusation on himself. Can there be greater happiness than in sacrificing one's self for the sake of the well-beloved, though it were but for a smile or a tear?

He was found among the rebels, told a generous lie; was condemned by the very judges who had accused Schumacker, sentenced to a cruel and ignominious death, and his name forever blasted. But what mattered all this to the young man? He had saved his Ethel's father.

He is now in chains in a damp cell, where light and air are but faintly admitted through gloomy port-holes. The only food he will ever have for the remainder of his existence is by his side—black bread and a jug of water. Though weighed down in chains from head to foot, he is lost in delightful dreams, and in one hour he realizes more what life is, than another feels in the space of a year.

"Perhaps my memory will not perish with me. I know that, at least, one heart will beat for me, a tear will fall for the blood so freely given. She will, perhaps, regret him who

sacrificed his life for her, and in my loved one's dreams her friend may sometimes find a place. Who can tell what comes after death? Perhaps the soul, delivered from its prison-house, may be allowed to watch over those well-beloved captives here below, and hold some intercourse with them, whereby they may secretly dispense some angelic virtue, and diffuse joy from heaven above."

At the moment of Ordener's great sacrifice he was oppressed with the bitter thought of Schumacker's inveterate hatred. He was haunted by the remembrance of that piercing cry which echoed through the court when sentence was passed on him, for he alone recognized the voice—his Ethel's. And then, should he ever see her again? should he ever hear the voice and press the hand of her for whom he was about to die?

Just then the old rusty hinges grated in their sockets. The young man thought it was the executioner come to do his duty. He was mistaken. The door was thrown open, and Ordener gazed on a pale and wan-looking face. Ordener doubted his eyes and asked himself if he were not already in heaven. It was she—his Ethel!

The young girl threw herself into his arms, kissing the very chains of infamy with her unsullied lips, bedewing his hands with her

tears. She could not speak, but her heart seemed ready to break, and her sobbing prevented her uttering a single word.

He had never known such supreme happiness. He pressed her fondly to him; and no power on earth or in hell could have separated them. His near approaching death intensified his feelings, and he held his Ethel as though it were for all eternity.

He did not ask this angel how she had been able to get to him. She was there, and that was all-sufficient; for he well knew how love could overcome great difficulties.

Both were silent. What is the mere sound of a voice, compared to the inner language of the soul? There are some deep emotions which cannot be expressed.

The young girl at length raised her head from his shoulder.

"Ordener, I am come to save you," said she, in a hopeful tone, although her heart sank within her.

Ordener shook his head, and merely said:

"Save me, Ethel? You deceive yourself; flight is impossible."

"Alas! I know that but too well. The castle is filled with soldiers. Every door is guarded by archers and jailers, who are ever on the watch; but"—here she hesitated—"I can suggest other means."

"No, Ethel, your hopes are in vain; for they will be cruelly dispelled in a few hours' time by a stroke of the axe."

"Oh, pray cease! Ordener! You shall not die. Oh! banish this fearful idea. Yet I would have you picture it in all its horrors to me, that I may complete the sacrifice which insures your safety."

There was something indescribable in the girl's accent, and Ordener looked at her tenderly:

"Your sacrifice! What do you mean?"

She buried her head in her hands, and sobbing, cried in her anguish: "Oh, God!"

With a great effort she recovered herself, and smiled up into his face, like an angel going to the realms above.

"Listen, my Ordener. The scaffold will never be raised. For you can live by giving your promise to marry Ulrica d'Ahlefeld."

"Ulrica d'Ahlefeld! That name in your mouth, my Ethel?"

"Do not interrupt me," continued she, with the calmness of a martyr undergoing torture. "I have come on the part of Countess d'Ahlefeld. You will receive the king's pardon when you have promised to wed the grand chancellor's daughter. I implore you to accede to this, and live for her. I was

chosen as messenger, thinking I should have some influence over you."

"Ethel," replied the condemned man, coldly, "farewell; on leaving my cell, tell them to send the executioner."

She rose, stood pale and trembling before him; then, falling before him on her knees she wrung her hands:

"What have I done to him?" she murmured faintly.

Ordener lowered his eyes and remained silent.

"My lord!" she cried, dragging herself to him, "you do not answer. Will you not give me one word? must I feel there is nothing to live for?"

A tear rolled down the young man's cheek.

"Ethel, you have then ceased to love me!"

"Oh, God," cried the poor girl, wildly pressing his hand; "he tells me I do not love him! You, my Ordener, can you really have said these words?"

"You cannot love me, since you despise me."

He immediately repented this cruel speech. Ethel threw her arms around him, and with heartrending accents, cried:

"Pardon me, my adored Ordener; forgive me, as I forgive you. I despise you! Are you not my pride, my love, my all? Did my

words convey anything but deep love and the greatest respect for you? Alas! for your severity, when I thought to save you, my own Ordener, by sacrificing my whole life for yours."

"Well, then," said the young man, kissing away her tears, "was it not showing but little regard for me when you proposed that I should purchase life at the expense of my oath, my very love itself, and abandon my Ethel, for whose sake I am willing to shed the last drop of my blood?"

A long sigh preceded Ethel's response.

"Ordener, do not judge me hastily. I have greater powers of endurance than women generally have; but from our very dungeon I can see them erecting the scaffold on the Place d'Armes. Oh, Ordener! you cannot picture my grief as I gaze with horror on those men who are slowly preparing for the death of him who is my very life. The Countess d'Ahlefeld, who was seated near me when your fatal sentence was pronounced, came to the dungeon, where I had gone with my father, and suggested that I should make you this proposition. If I wished to save your life, she offered me this odious means of doing so. I must crush all hopes of happiness, renounce you, and give my Ordener up to another, that she may take the poor forsaken

Ethel's only joy. I had to choose between my own irremediable misfortune or your death, and I did not hesitate for a moment."

He respectfully kissed this angel's hand.

"And I do not hesitate either, Ethel. You would not offer me life and Ulrica d'Ahlefeld if you knew why I am really about to die."

"What! there is some mystery?"

"I must keep this secret from you, my Ethel, leaving you in ignorance whether to be grateful or to hate me for my death."

"You wish to die! Oh, God, can it be true that the scaffold is being erected for my Ordener? that no human power can save him from this fate? Pray look upon me, your companion, your very slave, and promise, my well-beloved, not to be angry at my words. Are you sure—answer your Ethel as you would your God—that you could not be happy with this woman, this Ulrica d'Ahlefeld? She is doubtless beautiful, gentle and good, and better far than her for whom you are about to sacrifice your life. My Ordener, my dear friend, do not turn your head aside. You are so young and so noble to perish on the scaffold. You could live with her in some gay city, where you would soon forget this gloomy dungeon. Your days would pass in peace, and you would hear nothing of me. Banish

me from your heart, and even from your thoughts; but live, Ordener, and leave me here to die. Believe me, when once you are in another's arms you need have no anxiety about me, for I shall not suffer long."

She ceased, for her voice was lost in tears. In her very despair there was still the fixed determination to gain the fatal victory, which to her meant death.

Ordener said to her :

"Ethel, do not speak thus, and let no name but our own pass our lips at such a time as this."

"Alas! alas! then all is useless, and you will die?"

"It must be so. I will gladly perish on the scaffold for your sake; whereas I should go with horror to the altar with any other woman. Do not press this subject; you only distress and offend me."

She wept, and still continued to murmur: "Oh, God! he then must die, and such an infamous death."

The condemned answered, smiling, "Believe me, Ethel, there is less dishonor in such a death as mine than in the terms you propose for purchasing my life."

He turned his eyes away for a moment, and they fell on an old man in priestly garb standing in the door-way.



"What do you want here?" said Ordener, roughly.

"My lord, I came with the envoy of the Countess d'Ahlefeld. You did not perceive me, and I have waited here in silence until you noticed me."

Indeed, Ordener and Ethel had only eyes for each other. The latter in the excitement had quite forgotten her companion.

"I am," continued the old man, "the priest charged . . ."

"I understand," said the young man. "I am ready."

The priest came toward him:

"God is also ready to receive you, my son."

"Reverend sir," answered Ordener, "your face seems familiar to me. I have seen you before."

The minister bowed.

"I remember meeting you, my son, in the Tower of Vygla. We can both show the fallacy of human promises. You assured me that twelve unfortunate criminals should receive their pardon. I, not knowing you were the viceroy's son, did not credit your words. You, my lord, reckoned that your rank and influence would obtain this concession . . ."

Ordener completed the thought that Athanasius Munder did not dare to finish.

"And now I can obtain no clemency, not even for myself. I thought little of the future, and this assurance has been punished, for time has proved my weakness."

The priest bowed his head.

"God is powerful."

Then, with a kindly look at Ordener, he added:

"God is good."

Ordener, who seemed preoccupied, cried, after a short silence:

"Listen, your reverence; I wish to keep the promise I made to you at Vygla. When I am no more, go to Berghen, and tell the viceroy, my father, what his son's last wishes were—pardon for your twelve *protégés*—and I am sure he will grant it."

A tear fell down the old man's face.

"My son, how noble of you to think of pardon for others at the very time you so courageously reject it for yourself. I was deeply moved by your refusal, while I could but blame you for such an excess of passionate emotion. I repeated to myself, '*Unde scelus!*' How is it that a man whose feelings so nearly approach perfection, can be guilty of the crime for which you are condemned?"

"Father, I have kept the secret from this angel, and I cannot reveal it to you; only I

would have you believe that the cause of my condemnation is not a crime."

"What? Explain yourself, my son."

"Do not insist," replied the young man, firmly. "Let me carry to the grave the secret which has compassed my death."

"This young man cannot be guilty," murmured the priest.

Then he drew forth a black cross, and placed it on a rough-hewn altar fixed against the damp prison wall. Near the crucifix he placed a lighted iron lamp and an open Bible.

"My son, pray and meditate, I will return in a few hours. Let us now go," said he to Ethel, who had remained silent during this solemn time; "we must leave the prisoner. Time is flying."

She rose radiant and calm, a divine light in her face:

"Your reverence, I cannot go until you have united Ethel Schumacker with Ordener Guldenlew, her betrothed."

She turned to Ordener:

"If you were still of the same rank and influence, and free, I would not unite my wretched fate with yours; but now that my misfortunes cannot affect you, for, like myself, you are a disgraced and oppressed captive, and about to die, I dare hope I may be your

companion in death, my Ordener, as I could never have been your companion in life. Your very love must tell you, that when you die, I shall cease to live."

The condemned man fell at her feet and kissed the hem of her garment.

"You, father," continued she to the old man, "will stand us in lieu of parents or family. May this cell be our temple, this stone our altar. Here is my ring, and we shall kneel in God's presence and before you. Pray, bestow your blessing on us, and read the sacred words which unite Ethel Schumacker to Ordener Guldenlew, her lord."

The priest was filled with astonishment and pity at the kneeling figures before him.

"What? My children, what are you doing?"

"Father," said the young girl, "time is flying; God and death are awaiting us."

There are moments when we are governed by some irresistible power. The priest felt this, and, with a sigh, he raised his eyes.

"May the Lord forgive me if I am to blame in making this concession. You love each other, and there remains but little time on earth for you to gratify this feeling. I do not consider I am failing in my duty by giving your love a rightful claim."

He proceeded with the irrevocable ceremony ; and after the priest's final blessing, they both arose as husband and wife.

The face of the condemned man shone with a sorrowful joy, for he now fully realized all the bitterness of death, since life offered so much bliss. The young girl felt all the pride of being a young wife.

"Listen to me," said she, "has not the prospect of death brought us happiness, my Ordener, since in life we could never have been united? Would you have me tell you, love, what I shall do? I shall place myself at my dungeon window, in full view of the scaffold, so that our souls may together wing their flight to heaven. If I die before the axe falls, then my body shall await yours, that the same tomb may inclose the bridegroom and his bride. Is it not so, my adored one?"

He pressed her to his heart, and murmured the words which filled his whole soul :

"Ethel, now you are really mine!"

"My children," said the chaplain tenderly, "you must bid each other farewell. It is time."

"Alas!" cried Ethel.

And she threw herself at the condemned man's feet.

"Farewell, my lord, my well-beloved Ordener. Pray give me your blessing."

The prisoner pronounced the touching words, and turned to salute the venerable Athanasius Munder. The old man, likewise, was kneeling before him.

"What would you have of me, father?" asked he, surprised.

The old man humbly replied :

"Your blessing, my son."

"May Heaven bless you and bestow on you as much happiness as your prayers have brought to other mortals," said Ordener in solemn, trembling accents.

Soon the gloomy vault echoed the last farewells, the final embraces were given, soon the heavy bolts were drawn, and the iron door separated the youthful husband from his wife. They, who were about to die, had arranged a meeting place in eternity.

## XLV.

To he who will deliver to me Louis Perez,  
dead or alive, I will give two thousand écus.

CALDERON—*Louis Perez de Galice.*

“Baron Voethaün, colonel of the Munckholm musketeers, which of the soldiers under your command made Han of Iceland prisoner at the Black Pillar? Name him, that he may receive the thousand crowns promised for this capture.”

Thus spoke the president of the court to the colonel of the musketeers. The court was still assembled, for according to ancient custom in Norway, when judgment is given without appeal, the judges must remain on the bench till the sentence be carried out. The giant stands before them, with a rope around his neck, by which in a few hours he will be suspended.

The colonel, who was placed near the clerk's table, arose, bowed to the bench and the bishop, who had resumed his official seat.

"My lord judges, the soldier who took Han of Iceland prisoner is here. His name is Toric Belfast, second musketeer in my regiment."

"Let him come," said the president, "and receive the promised reward."

A young soldier, in the uniform of the Munckholm musketeers, stepped forward.

"You are Toric Belfast?" asked the president.

"Yes, your grace."

"You took Han of Iceland prisoner?"

"Yes, by the aid of Saint Beelzebub, may it please your excellency."

A heavy purse was placed on the bench.

"Do you recognize this man as the famous Han of Iceland?" said the president, indicating the enchained giant.

"I know my pretty Cattie's face better than that of Han of Iceland, but I swear, by the glory of Saint Belphegor, that if Han of Iceland be anywhere, he is in this great devil's form."

"Draw near, Toric Belfast. Here are the thousand crowns promised by the High Syndic."

The soldier was stepping eagerly forward, when a voice in the crowd exclaimed:

"Musketeer of Munckholm, it was not you who took Han of Iceland prisoner."



"Well, by all the happy devils," cried the soldier. "At the present moment I have nothing but my pipe to offer, but I vow I will hand over ten thousand golden crowns to him who has just given me the denial, if he can prove the truth of his words."

And crossing his arms, he looked with perfect assurance around the audience, and added :

"Let him who has just spoken show himself."

"It was I!" said a short individual, making his way to the centre of the court.

The new-comer was wrapped in matting, made of rush and seal-fur, such as is used by the Greenlanders, which fell from the shoulders, and gave him the appearance of a conical shaped hut. His beard and long bushy hair were black, the little that could be seen of his eyebrows was red, the rest of his face was truly hideous. Neither his arms nor hands were visible.

"Ah, so you are the man?" said the soldier, with a burst of laughter; "and it is you, my fine sir, who had the honor of taking this diabolical giant?"

The little man shook his head, and said with a sort of malicious smile :

"It was I."

At this moment, Baron Vœthaïn recognized this singular man as the same mysterious being who at Skongen had given him notice of the rebels' approach. Chancellor d'Ahlefeld saw before him the host of the ruin of Arbar. The clerk of the court knew him as a certain peasant of Oœlmœ, who wore the same kind of matting, and who had shown him Han of Iceland's retreat. These three persons, being separated, were unable to communicate to each other their passing impression, and they were by no means certain of the fact, owing to the individual's different disguises.

"And so it was really you?" said the soldier, ironically. "By the look in your eyes, if it were not for that Greenland costume of yours, I should be inclined to think you were the same odd-shaped dwarf who wanted to quarrel with me at the Spladgest about a fortnight since, the very day they brought in the miner Gill Stadt's corpse."

"Gill Stadt," echoed the little man, shuddering.

"Yes, Gill Stadt," continued the musketeer, indifferently, "the jilted lover of a girl who had been the mistress of one of our comrades, and for whom he died, like a fool."

The little man said sullenly :

"Was there not also, at the Spladgest, the body of an officer belonging to your regiment?"

"Precisely so. I shall ever remember that day, for while at the Spladgest I quite forgot all about the hour of the retreat, and on my return to the fortress I narrowly escaped being degraded. That officer was Captain Dispolson."

At the mention of this name the clerk of the court immediately arose.

"These two people abuse the patience of the court. We beg the president to put an end to this useless discourse."

"By my Cattie's honor, I wish for nothing better," said Toric Belfast, "provided your lordships will award me the thousand crowns promised for Han, for I made him prisoner."

"You lie," cried the little man.

The soldier felt at his side for his sabre.

"Scoundrel, you are fortunate in being in the presence of justice, for a soldier, even a Munckholm musketeer, must remain unarmed like an old cock."

"The reward is mine," pursued the little man, coldly; "without me you could never take Han of Iceland."

The soldier retorted furiously that he had found Han of Iceland lying semi-conscious on

the battle-field, and had taken him prisoner as he began to recover.

"That is all very well," rejoined his adversary; "you may have taken him, but it was I who knocked him down. Had I not done so you would never have captured him; therefore the reward of a thousand crowns belongs to me."

"It is false," replied the soldier. "You never overthrew him. He was struck down by a spirit, who appeared in the skin of some beasts."

"It was I."

"No, no, I."

The president requested silence, and again asked Colonel Voethaün if Toric Belfast had really brought in Han of Iceland prisoner. The reply being in the affirmative, he declared that the soldier was entitled to the reward.

The little man gnashed his teeth, and just as the musketeer eagerly pressed forward to receive the purse, he cried:

"One minute, my lord president. According to the high syndic's decree, this sum belongs to him who should deliver up Han of Iceland."

"Well, then?" said the judges.

Turning toward the giant, the little man exclaimed:

"This man is not Han of Iceland."

A murmur of astonishment ran through the court. The president and the private secretary seemed both greatly agitated.

"No, this money does not belong to that cursed Munckholm musketeer," said the little man, fiercely, "for that man is not Han of Iceland!"

"Halberdiers, seize that madman," cried the president. "He has lost his senses."

The bishop then interposed:

"Honored president, permit me to observe, by your refusal to hear this man you deprive the condemned men here of all chance of escape. I must request that the inquiry continue."

"Reverend bishop, the court is anxious to satisfy you," replied the president, and turning to the giant, "You have sworn, that you are Han of Iceland. Do you still declare the same, now that you are sentenced to death?"

The condemned man answered:

"I swear I am Han of Iceland."

"You hear, my lord bishop?"

The little man shouted at the same time:

"You lie, you Kole mountaineer, you lie. Why persist in bearing a name which will be your destruction? Remember how fatal it has already proved to you."

"I am Han, of Klipstadur, in Iceland," stoically answered the giant, keeping his eyes fixed on the clerk of the court.

The little man approached the Munckholm musketeer, who was listening attentively to this curious scene.

"Kole mountaineer, they say Han of Iceland drinks human blood. If you are he drink it, here is some."

He had scarcely pronounced these words when he stabbed the musketeer to the heart, with a dagger he had concealed beneath the matting, and threw the corpse at the feet of the giant.

The crowd was horror-stricken, the soldiers on guard drew back from the giant, and terrified cries arose on all sides. The little man, quick as lightning, plunged his dagger into the mountaineer, whose identity was now discovered, as he fell on the soldier's body. Throwing aside the matting, wig, and false beard the monster showed himself in all his hideousness, clothed in the skins of beasts. His appearance created greater horror among the spectators than the instrument streaming with the blood of his two victims.

"Ha, ha, judges; where is Han of Iceland?"

"Guards, seize that monster," cried the terrified president.

Han threw his dagger into the hall.

"That is useless to me, as there are no more Munckholm soldiers here."

Thus speaking he gave himself up to the halberdiers without resistance; they had prepared to take him by assault, as they would a fortress, but he quietly gave himself up. He was chained to the prisoners' bench. A litter bore away his victims, one of whom, the mountaineer, still breathed.

It is impossible to picture the terror and indignation of the whole court during this horrible scene. The brigand sat calm and unmoved in the fatal dock. The curiosity of the crowd overcame all other feelings, and their rapt attention kept them quiet.

The venerable bishop arose.

"My lords judges . . ." said he.

The brigand hastily interrupted him.

"Bishop of Drontheim, I am Han of Iceland; do not take the trouble to defend me."

The private secretary arose.

"Noble president . . ."

The monster cut short his words.

"Clerk of the court, I am Han of Iceland; don't trouble yourself to accuse me."

Then, standing there with his feet steeped in blood, he looked ferociously around. Judges, guards, spectators, all were terrified at this man's glance—he, who stood alone, disarmed, and in chains.

“Listen, judges. Do not expect long words from me. I am the demon of Klipstadur. My mother came from that old Iceland, the iceland of volcanoes. It was formerly only a mountain, but a giant falling from heaven crushed in the summit. You hardly want me to tell you about myself. I am a descendant of Ingulphus the Exterminator, whose spirit exists in me. I have committed more murders and created more incendiarisms than the whole of you have passed judgments. I have a secret in common with Chancellor d’Ahlefeld. I should delight in drinking all the blood in your bodies. My nature is to hate men, my mission is to injure them. Colonel of the Munckholm musketeers, it was I who warned you that the miners would pass through Black Pillar, as I was certain you would then create great slaughter among them in those defiles. It was I who hurled the blocks of granite on your regiment, crushing a whole battalion, just to avenge my son. Judges, now that my son is dead, I come here in search of death. I am weighed down by Ingulphus’ spirit, because I alone can transmit it, and I have no heir. I am tired of life, as I have no successor to whom I can inculcate my principles or show an example. Besides, my thirst is quenched with the blood quaffed; and now here I am, and you can drink mine.”



He ceased, and the echo of his fearful words ran through the crowd.

The bishop spoke to him:

"My son, what made you commit so many crimes?"

The brigand laughed.

"Upon my word, reverend bishop, it was not to enrich myself, like your brother the Bishop of Borglum.<sup>12</sup> Something within me urged me on."

"God does not always abide in all His ministers," humbly replied the old saintly man. "You insult me, while my wish is to defend you."

"Your reverence is only wasting time. Just ask your brother, the Bishop of Scalholt, in Iceland. By Ingulphus! it would be strange, indeed, if two bishops should watch over my life—one at my cradle and the other at my grave. Bishop, you are an old idiot."

"My son, do you believe in God?"

"Why not? I hope there is a God to blaspheme."

"Stop! wretched man! You are at the point of death, and yet you refuse to throw yourself at Christ's feet!"

Han of Iceland shrugged his shoulders.

"If I did, it would be after the style of the policeman of Kole, who kissed the king's foot, and knocked his majesty over."

The bishop resumed his seat deeply moved.

"Come, judges," continued Han of Iceland, "what are you hesitating about? If I were in your place and you in mine, I would not keep you so long waiting for your sentence of death."

The judges retired, but returned after a short deliberation. The president read a sentence in a loud voice which, according to the formula, condemned Han of Iceland *to be hanged by the neck till death should ensue*.

"That is all right," said the brigand. "Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, I know enough about you to hang you, but live on, as you cause men so much harm. Well, I am sure now of not going to Nysthiem."<sup>13</sup>

The private secretary of the court ordered the guards to place Han in the Lion of Sleswig dungeon, while a cell was prepared for him adjoining the Munckholm musketeers' quarters.

"In the quarters of the Munckholm musketeers!" repeated the monster, with a growl of joy.

## XLVI.

Meanwhile the corpse of Ponce de Léon, which laid near the fountain, having been disfigured by the sun, was stolen by Alpuxare's Moors who carried it to Grenada.

E. H. — *Le Captif d' Ochali.*

Meanwhile, before dawn, just about the time Ordener's sentence was being passed at Munckholm, Oglypiglap, former assistant to Benignus Spiagudry, and now his successor as keeper of the Drontheim Spladgest, was awakened by several heavy knocks from outside. He rose reluctantly, swearing at the dazzling light of his brass lantern and the dampness of the mortuary, and opened the door to those who had allowed him so little repose.

Some fishermen presented themselves, bearing a litter covered with rushes and seaweed, on which a body lay, that they had found in Lake Sparbo.

They deposited their burden in the interior of the edifice, and Oglypiglap gave them a receipt for the same, in order that they should claim their reward.

When alone in the Spladgest he began to strip the corpse of a man remarkable for his length and thinness. The first thing he noticed when he raised the sail in which it was wrapped, was an immense wig.

“Certainly, I have seen this wig before. Why, it belonged to that elegant young Frenchman; and here are Postilion Cramner’s top-boots, the poor fellow who was crushed under his horses. What the devil does this mean? Here is Professor Syngramtax’s black coat, the old scholar who lately drowned himself. Who can this new-comer be, dressed up in the clothes of all my old acquaintances?”

He examined the face, but it had lost all form and feature. He searched the pockets, and found a slimy old parchment. Wiping it carefully with his leather apron, he succeeded in reading these half-effaced words:

“Rudbeck Saxon, the grammarian; Arngrim, Bishop of Holum. There are only two counties in Norway, Larvig, and Jarlberg, and one barony. There are silver mines at Kongsberg; loadstone, asbestos at Sund-Moer; amethysts at Guldbranshal; chalcadony, agates, jasper, in the Faroe Isles. At Noukahiva, in time of famine, men eat their wives and children. Thormodus Thorfoeus; Isleif, Bishop of Scalholt, the first Iceland

historian. Mercury played at chess with the moon, and gained the seventy-second part of a day. Maelstrom, a whirlpool. *Hirundo*, *hirudo*. Cicero; chick-peas: glory. Frode, the scholar. Odin consulted the head of Mimer, the sage. (Mahomet and his pigeon. Sertorius and his goat.) The better the soil, less the gypsum."

"I cannot believe my eyes," cried Ogly-piglap, letting the parchment fall. "Why, this is in the writing of my old master, Benignus Spiagudry."

Then, examining the corpse more closely, he recognized the long hands, the scanty hair, and the body of the unfortunate man.

"They were not far wrong," thought he, shaking his head, "when they accused him of sacrilege and necromancy. Satan must have carried him off, and drowned him in Lake Sparbo. Who would have imagined that Dr. Spiagudry, who kept others so long here, in his hotel for the dead, should one day be brought here himself."

The philosophical little Laplander was placing the body on one of the six granite slabs, when he observed that some heavy weight was attached with a leather strap to the unfortunate Spiagudry's neck.

"It is most likely a stone, fastened to his neck by the devil when he pitched him into the lake," murmured he.

He was mistaken, for it proved to be a small iron casket, upon which on close inspection, after having cleaned it, he noticed a lock covered with an escutcheon.

"There is doubtless some deviltry in this box," said he. "This man was a sorcerer, and committed sacrilege. I had better take the casket to the bishop. There may be a demon inside."

Then, leaving the corpse in the mortuary, he carried the casket to the bishop's palace, muttering some prayers on the way, as a safeguard against the contents of the terrible box he was carrying.

## XLVII.

Is it a man or an infernal spirit who speaks thus? What unlucky spirit torments you? Show me the implacable enemy which has possession of your heart.

MATURIN.

Han of Iceland and Schumacker were both confined in the dungeon of Sleswig. The ex-chancellor, though proved innocent of the crime, was nevertheless dwelling bitterly on his fate, as he walked slowly up and down. The condemned brigand, guarded on all sides, only laughed at his chains.

The two prisoners had long been silently observing each other, innately knowing they were both enemies to mankind.

"Who are you?" at last inquired the ex-chancellor of the brigand.

"I will soon tell you my name," answered the other, "that you may shun me. I am Han of Iceland."

"Take my hand," said he.

Schumacker stepped towards him.

"Do you want me to devour it?"

"Han of Iceland," answered Schumacker, "I like you because you detest mankind."

"That's why I hate you!"

"Listen to me. Like yourself, I hate men; because I have tried to benefit them, and they returned me evil for good."

"You cannot abhor them as I do, for they have benefited me, and I have returned evil for good."

Schumacker shuddered at the expression of the monster's face. He could have no bond of sympathy with a nature like that.

"Yes," continued the ex-chancellor, "I execrate men because I have found them knaves, ungrateful and cruel. It is to them I owe all my misfortunes."

"So much the better. I owe them all my happiness in life."

"What happiness?"

"The joy of feeling their yet breathing form shrink, as I tear the flesh to pieces with my teeth, and their warm blood refreshing my parched lips. What can exceed the pleasure of smashing human beings against the edge of rocky corners, and hearing the victims' cries mingling with the sound of the crushing bones? Those are the enjoyments men have given me."

Schumacker was horror-stricken, and stepped back from the monster toward whom he



had lately approached with such pride, thinking he had met with a kindred spirit. He now buried his face in his hands, crying with shame and indignation. The tears were not shed on account of the human race; but he was filled with remorse for the feelings he had himself shown. His noble heart was humiliated at the hatred he had evinced toward men when he saw it reflected in such a creature as Han of Iceland.

“Well,” said the monster, laughing, “what does mankind’s enemy say now? Do you still dare to boast that you resemble me?”

The old man shuddered.

“Oh, God! rather than hate them as you do, I would prefer to love them.”

The guards came forward to take the monster into a more secure cell. Schumacker, left to himself, sat lost in thought, but he was no longer an enemy to mankind.

## XLVIII.

Do not chastise me, for my crime is his crime.

A. DE VIGNY.

The fatal hour had arrived. The sun had scarcely risen above the horizon, the guards were doubled in Munckholm Castle, and before every door fierce sentinels paced to and fro. The uproar in the town reached the gloomy fortress, itself the scene of great excitement. The crape-muffled drums were slowly beating, the cannon from the tower rolled forth at intervals, and the heavy dungeon bell tolled with deep and prolonged tones. Boats came from every point to the formidable rock, heavily charged with passengers.

The crowd kept steadily increasing on the parade, surrounding the scaffold, which was also draped in black, and well guarded by a detachment of the military. A man in red serge was promenading the fatal platform, occasionally resting on his axe, and trying the block to test its firmness. Torches were

burning in front of the scaffold, before which a stake was placed, bearing a signboard engraven with these words, *Ordener Guldenlew, traitor*. From the Place d'Armes could be seen, floating above the donjon of Sleswig, a large black flag.

Meanwhile Ordener reappeared in the assembled court, the bishop alone being absent, as his office for the defense was over.

The viceroy's son was in black, wearing the collar of the Order of the Dannebrog. His face was pale, but it bore the same haughty expression. The condemned man stood alone, as he had been summoned before the chaplain, Athanasius Munder, had returned to the cell.

Although Ordener was prepared for the sacrifice, still he could not help bitterly regretting his fate. Ethel's husband would have chosen a far different ending than the grave now that he was united to his love. Now that the time had arrived when he would shortly be beyond all the prayers and dreams which had beguiled his prison hours, he trusted in God and love to give him strength to bear the trial.

The crowd, wrapped in deep attention, was more moved than the condemned man himself. His rank and horrible fate awakened both feelings of envy and pity. Many were

present at his punishment without knowing the crime for which he was about to suffer. It is strange that men should take pleasure in witnessing the sight of human agony. They eagerly watched the features of the one about to die, as though expecting that the wretched man's eyes would express some revelation from heaven or hell, or that death would cast its shadow over him. They go to see how a man can look when all hope has fled—this being, full of strength and health, who breathes and lives like themselves, yet who in a few short moments will cease to breathe, to live. He has never injured them, and they pity him; but none will venture to help the unfortunate wretch, now on the verge of death, without being permitted the final gasp, and who is shortly to be struck off at a single blow—this life, which society cannot give, yet ruthlessly takes away, with all the pomp of judicial murder, tending only to inflame the imagination of the spectators. Time, with its indefinite delays, condemns us all to death, yet it is a strange and grievous sight to watch the unfortunate being who knows his hour is nigh.

Ordener was brought into court that he might be stripped of his rank and honors, previous to mounting the scaffold. The assembly was scarcely restored to calmness,

when the president, commanding that a respectful silence should be maintained, ordered the condemned man to remain before him on bended knee, while he read in a clear, distinct tone the following words from the archives of the Knights of the Dannebrog:

“Christian, by the grace and pity of the Almighty King of Denmark, Norway, of the Vandals and of the Goths; Duke of Sleswig, Holstein, Stormarie, and of Dytmarsa; Count of Oldenburg and of Delmenhurst; also on the proposition of the grand chancellor, created Count of Griffenfeld (here the president spoke so rapidly that the name was scarcely heard), Knight of the royal Order of the Dannebrog, founded by our illustrious ancestor, Saint Waldemar.

“In memory of the Dannebrog standard, having been sent direct from heaven to our blessed kingdom.

“It would be against the precepts of this Divine order if one of its knights were allowed to abuse with impunity the honor and holy laws, both of Church and State.

“We order, on his knees before God, any knight of the order, who has given his soul to the devil by means of felony or treachery, to be publicly censured by a judge, and then forever degraded of his rank as Knight of our royal Order of Dannebrog.”

The president closed the book.

“Ordener Guldenlew, Baron of Thorwick, Knight of Dannebrog, you have been guilty of high treason, a crime for which your head is to be severed, your body burned, and your ashes cast to the winds. Ordener Guldenlew, traitor, you have rendered yourself unworthy to rank amid the Knights of Dannebrog; therefore prepare yourself, for I am about to publicly degrade you in the name of the king.”

Resting his hand on the book of the Order, the president was going to pronounce the fatal formula on Ordener, who still remained calm and unmoved, when a door to the right of the bench was thrown open, and an usher announced his reverence the Bishop of the Drontheimhus.

It was indeed he, the bishop, entering the hall suddenly accompanied by another ecclesiastic on whom he leaned.

“Stop! my lord president,” cried he, with a force beyond his years. “Stop! May Heaven be praised! I have arrived in time.”

The assembly listened with renewed attention, foreseeing that some fresh event was about to occur.

The president angrily turned towards the bishop.

“Your reverence must allow me to remark that your presence is useless here. The

condemned man is on the point of being degraded, and his last moments are at hand."

"Beware," said the bishop, "of touching him who is guiltless in the sight of God. This condemned man is innocent!"

The crowd gave vent to their astonishment, and their loud exclamations were only exceeded by the terrified cries of the president and the private secretary.

"Yes, tremble, judges!" continued the bishop, before the president had recovered his presence of mind; "tremble! for you were about to shed innocent blood."

Whilst the president's emotion was subsiding, Ordener was in consternation, lest his generous plan had been frustrated by the discovery of certain proofs against Schmacker.

"My lord bishop," said the president, "if this criminal affair pass from hand to hand, it will escape us altogether. Do not trust to appearances. If Ordener Guldenlew be innocent, who, then, is guilty?"

"I will soon make your grace acquainted with the fact," replied the bishop, then pointing to an iron casket an attendant was carrying: "Noble lords, in delivering your judgments you were utterly in the dark, but light will dawn when you have seen the contents of that casket."

The president, and the private secretary, and Ordener, all seemed equally struck with emotion at the sight of the mysterious box. The bishop continued :

“Noble judges, hear me. On entering our palace this day, in order to rest from the fatigues of the night, and to pray for those condemned men, this sealed box was handed to us. The keeper of the Spladgest had left it at our palace with the injunction that it doubtless contained some satanic mystery, as he found it on the dead body of that sacrilegious Benignus Spiagudry, whose corpse was brought in from Lake Sparbo.”

Ordener listened with renewed attention. The audience maintained strict silence. The president and the secretary bent their heads like criminals. Their audacity and cunning had completely vanished. All power at times forsakes the wicked.

“After having blessed the casket,” pursued the bishop, “and broke the seal itself, stamped with the Griffenfeld arms, this box did, indeed, contain a diabolical secret, the purport of which you have now the opportunity of judging, honored lords. I must ask for your deepest attention, for it is a question of men’s blood, and the Lord weighs every drop in the scale.”



Then, opening the casket, he brought forth a parchment, on which was written the following inscription :

"I, Blaxtham Cumbysulsum, doctor, now at the point of death, do intrust to Captain Dispolsen, of Copenhagen, agent to the former Count of Griffenfeld, the following document, written entirely by Turiaf Musdoemon, assistant to the chancellor, Count d'Ahlefeld. The said captain may make what use he pleases with the same. I pray God to pardon all my crimes. At Copenhagen, the eleventh day of January, one thousand six hundred and ninety-nine.

"CUMBYSULSUM."

The secretary made an effort to speak, but he trembled so in every limb that he could not utter a syllable. The bishop handed the parchment to the pale and agitated president.

"What do I see here?" cried he, spreading the document before him. "'Letter to the noble Count d'Ahlefeld, showing what means should be taken to rid himself legally of Schumacker'—! I swear, reverend bishop . . ."

The parchment fell from the president's hands.

"Read on, read on, my lord," said the bishop. "I doubt not your unworthy servant has made use of your name in the same way he did that of the unfortunate Schumacker. Only see what your unchristianlike hatred brought down on your disgraced predecessor.

One of the courtiers plotted to ruin him in your name, hoping, doubtless, to find favor in your grace's eyes."

These words plainly proved to the president that the bishop knew the contents of the box, but evidently he did not suspect him. Ordener breathed more freely as he clearly saw that Schumacker's innocence and his own would be proved at the same time. He wondered at the curious freak of fortune, which impelled him to go in pursuit of this formidable brigand for the iron casket, when his guide had it in his own possession. In fact, he was running after the casket which was in reality following him. He pondered on the strangeness of events, and the fatal box that had led to his ruin was now to prove the means of saving him.

The president, having recovered his self-possession, read a long letter, wherein Musdœmon detailed the abominable plot that he had so thoroughly carried out. Count d'Ahlefeld showed signs of the utmost indignation, in which the audience freely shared. Several times the clerk rose to defend himself, but he was universally hooted, and when the document came to a close the people cried with horror.

"Halberdiers, seize that man!" exclaimed the president, indicating his private secretary.

The villain, helpless and speechless, left his post of honor to take his seat on the bench of infamy, amidst the howls of the populace.

“My lords judges,” said the bishop, “may tremble, and yet you have cause for rejoicing. The facts you have just heard can now be verified by our honored brother, Athanasius Munder, here present, the prison chaplain of this royal city.”

It was, indeed, Athanasius Munder, who, at a sign from the president, rose, and, bowing to the bishop and the bench, said :

“What I am about to assert is strictly true. May Heaven punish me if I utter a word with any but the best intent. When I visited the viceroy’s son this morning in his cell, I felt the young man was not guilty, although your lordships had convicted him on his own confession. A few hours ago I was called upon to administer the spiritual consolation to the unhappy mountaineer who was so cruelly assassinated before your eyes, and whom you had condemned, honored lords, as Han of Iceland. This is the confession he made to me : ‘I am not Han of Iceland ; I have been well punished for taking the name. I was paid for being his substitute by Musdoemon, the clerk of the court of chancery, who supervised the whole of the insurrection, under the name of Hacket. He is the originator and sole cause

of all.' Then the mountaineer asked me for my blessing, and implored me to repeat his words to the court. As God is my witness, this is nothing but the truth. May I be the means of saving the innocent, and punishing the guilty."

The priest ceased, and again bowed to the bishop and the judges.

"Your grace sees," said the bishop, "that one of my clients was not far from wrong when he distinguished the resemblance between Hacket and your clerk."

"Turiaf Musdœmon," said the president, "what have you to say in your defense?"

Musdœmon looked at his master in a way which terrified him. All his assurance had returned. After a moment's hesitation, he replied:

"Nothing, my lord."

The president then continued, in a strained and faint voice:

"You plead guilty, then, to the crime with which you are charged? You are the author of a conspiracy both against the State and an individual named Schumacker?"

"Yes, my lord," answered Musdœmon.

The bishop rose.

"My lord president, that there may be no doubt in this affair, will your grace ask the accused if he had any accomplices?"

"Accomplices!" repeated Musdœmon.

He seemed to reflect for a moment. A horrible embarrassment shone in the president's countenance.

"No, my lord bishop," said he at last.

The president looked toward him evidently greatly relieved.

"No, I never had accomplices," continued Musdœmon more forcibly. "I was the inventor and promoter of the whole plot, instigated by one motive—my attachment to my master, by this means hoping to ruin his enemy, Schumacker. My master was ignorant of the conspiracy."

The president and the clerk again exchanged glances full of meaning.

"Your grace," said the bishop, "must now be aware that, as Musdœmon had no accomplices, Ordener Guldenlew cannot be guilty."

"Reverend bishop, if he were not so, why did he plead guilty?"

"My lord president, why did that mountaineer persist in calling himself Han of Iceland, even at the peril of his life? God alone knows what exists at the bottom of our hearts."

Ordener spoke.

"Your lordship, now that the real culprit is discovered, I may confess that I falsely

accused myself, in order to save Ex-Chancellor Schumacker's life, for by his death his daughter would have been left without a protector."

The president bit his lips.

"We now ask the court," said the bishop, "to proclaim our client Ordener's innocence."

The president signed in the affirmative, and the high syndic requested that the examination of the casket should be proceeded with. It was found to contain nothing except Schumacker's vouchers and title-deeds, some few letters of the Munckholm prisoner to Captain Dispolsen, in which he expressed himself bitterly, but by no means in a culpable way likely to create alarm, unless it were to Chancellor d'Ahlefeld.

The judges, meanwhile, were deliberating, but shortly came to a decision. While the crowd on the parade watched in anxious expectation, the executioner walked carelessly up and down the scaffold, awaiting the condemned man. The president's voice was scarcely audible as he pronounced the judgment which condemned to death Turiaf Musdoemon, and restored to Ordener Guldenlew his former position, with all its honors, titles, and privileges.

## XLIX.

For how much will you sell me your carcase, knave? I will give you, upon my honor, a golden ducat.

A MYSTERY—*Saint Michel à Satan.*

What remained of the regiment of Munckholm musketeers was lodged in its old barracks in the heart of the fortress, surrounding a large square yard. According to custom, all doors were barricaded at night, and none of the soldiers were absent, except the sentinels on duty in the various towers, and those stationed in front of the military prison, which adjoined the barracks. The prison, the safest and best guarded one in Munckholm, was chosen for the two condemned men, who were to be hanged in the morning—Han of Iceland and Musdœmon.

Han of Iceland is lying in chains on the ground of his cell, with his head resting on a stone. A faint glimmer shone through the iron grating in the oaken door, which separates his cell from his keeper's room, whence he could hear them swearing and laughing by turns, to the sound of empty bottles and the

rattling of dice as they cast them on the drums. The monster silently bit his chains, stretched forth his limbs in all directions.

Suddenly he raised his voice and called, a jailer presented himself at the barred opening.

"What do you want?" said he to the brigand.

"Companion, I am cold; my stone couch is hard and damp. Give me some straw to lie on, and a little fire to warm me."

"Well, it is only fair," said the jailer, "that a poor devil who is going to be hanged should have his comforts, even though it be the devil himself. I will bring you what you want. Have you any money?"

"No," replied the brigand.

"What! Do you mean to tell me that you, the most famous robber in Norway, have not some wretched golden ducats in your money bag?"

"No," answered the brigand.

"A few royal écus?"

"No, I tell you."

"Not even some miserable ascalins?"

"No, no, nothing. Not even enough to buy a rat's skin or a man's soul."

The jailer shrugged his shoulders.

"That is different," said he. "You ought not to complain; your cell is not half as cold as the one you will rest in to-morrow. You



won't notice the hardness of your bed then I vow."

Thus saying the jailer withdrew, followed by the monster's curses, who continued to roll his chains about with such violence, that some of the links gave way, thus reducing the rattling sound.

The oaken door was thrown open, and a tall man in red serge entered, carrying a dark lantern. He was accompanied by the warder, who had refused the prisoner's request. The latter was now perfectly quiet.

"Han of Iceland," said the man in red, "I am Nychol Orugix, the Drontheimhus executioner. To-morrow, at the break of day, I am to have the honor of hanging your excellency by the neck to a beautiful new gibbet, just erected in Drontheim square."

"Are you quite sure that you will hang me?" replied the brigand.

The executioner laughed.

"I wish you were as sure of Jacob's ladder to heaven as you are of Nychol Orugix's ladder up to the gibbet."

"Indeed!" said the monster, with a malicious look.

"I repeat to you, master brigand, that I am executioner of the province!"

"If I were any man but what I am, I should wish to be you."

"I cannot say as much," said the hangman, highly flattered, and proudly rubbing his hands together. "You are right, my friend, ours is a noble profession. Ah, how well my hand can test the weight of a man's head."

"Have you ever drank blood?" asked the brigand.

"No, but I have often shed it."

"Have you ever devoured the entrails of a living little child yet?"

"No; but I have crushed human bones in the boot, wrenched limbs out of their sockets on the wheel, tortured the still breathing body with red-hot pincers, dried up the blood in the open veins by means of molten lead or boiling oil, and I have notched steel saws on many of those whose skulls I have previously laid bare."

"Yes," said the brigand, with a sigh, "you also have your pleasures."

"Well, although you are Han of Iceland, I can say that I have caused more souls to take their flight than you have, and that without counting yours to-morrow."

"That is, supposing I have one. Now, executioner of the Drontheimhus, do you for one moment believe that you can separate the soul of Ingulphus from Han of Iceland's body without forfeiting your own life?"

The executioner shouted with laughter.

"Ah, indeed! we shall see to-morrow."

"We shall see!" retorted the brigand.

"Come," said the hangman, "I have not come here to talk about your soul, but about your body. Now listen to me. After death your body rightfully belongs to me, but the law gives you the privilege of selling it to me. Now, what do you want for it?"

"What do I want for my own corpse?" said the brigand.

"Yes; and be reasonable."

Han of Iceland turned to the jailer:

"Comrade, tell me what you charge for a bundle of straw and a little fire?"

The jailer reflected for a moment:

"Two golden ducats," answered he.

"Well," said the brigand to the hangman, "you will have to pay me two golden ducats for my corpse."

"Two golden ducats, indeed!" cried the headsman. "That is horribly dear. Two whole golden ducats for a vile body. No, certainly, I'll not give you that sum."

"Then you won't have it," quietly answered the monster.

"Well, your corpse will be thrown into the common sewer, instead of forming an ornament to the Royal Museum at Copenhagen, or being placed among the curiosities at Berghen."

"What does it matter?"

“Why, long after your death people will flock to see your skeleton, exclaiming : ‘*There are the remains of the famous Han of Iceland.*’ Your bones will be carefully polished, and kept together with brass pins. You will be put under a glass case, which will be dusted every day. Instead of such honors as these, think of the fate which awaits you if you refuse to sell me your corpse. You will be left to decay in some charnel-house, to furnish food for worms and vultures.”

“Well ! I shall only resemble the living, who are worried by lesser creatures, and become the prey of larger ones.”

“Two golden ducats !” muttered the executioner, viciously ; “what exorbitant terms ! if you do not lower your price, my dear Han of Iceland, we cannot do business together.”

“This is the first and probably the last sale I shall effect in my life, so I am naturally anxious to make a good bargain.”

“Remember, I can soon make you repent your obstinacy. To-morrow you will be entirely in my power.”

“And so you think ?”

The monster uttered these words in a significant tone, which passed unnoticed by the executioner.

“Yes ; there is a certain way of fixing the slip-knot. There, if you will only

be reasonable, I will hang you in a better fashion."

"I care but little how you may twist my neck to-morrow," retorted the monster, jeeringly.

"Come, won't you be satisfied with two royal crowns? What is the use of them to you?"

"Ask your comrade there," said the brigand, pointing to the jailer. "He wants two golden ducats for a bundle of straw and a little fuel."

"By St. Joseph's saw!" said the executioner, ill-naturedly, "it is awful to ask weight in gold for some paltry firing and some vile straw. Two ducats."

The jailer replied sharply :

"I ought to be praised for not asking four. It is all very well for you to talk, Master Nychol, but you are a regular screw. Fancy refusing a poor prisoner two golden ducats for his corpse, when you will sell it for twenty ducats, at least, to some scholar or to a doctor."

"I have never paid more than fifteen ascalins," said the hangman.

"Yes, that may be, for the body of a paltry thief, or a wretched Jew; but every one knows that you can demand any price for Han of Iceland's body."

Han of Iceland shrugged his shoulders.

“What business is it of yours?” said Orugix, roughly. “Do I interfere with your pilferings, when you rob the prisoners of their clothes and jewels, and mix dirty water with their weak soup? Do I say a word when you torture them to extract money? No, I will not pay two golden ducats.”

“No straw and no fuel for less than two golden ducats,” replied the jailer, obstinately.

“No corpse for less than two golden ducats,” calmly added the brigand.

After a moment’s silence, the executioner, with a stamp of the foot, exclaimed:

“Come, I must be off; time flies, and I am wanted elsewhere.”

He took from his vest a leather pouch, he opened it slowly as though regretfully.

“There, cursed demon of Iceland, take your two ducats. Satan won’t give as much for your soul as I am paying for your body.”

The brigand seized the golden pieces, which the jailer tried to grasp.

“Not quite so fast, companion; first hand me what I bargained for.”

The jailer went out, and soon returned with a bundle of fresh straw and a caldron full of burning coals, which he placed near the condemned man.

“I am satisfied,” said the brigand, throwing him the two ducats. “That shall warm

me to-night. By the by, is not my cell close to the Munckholm musketeers' barracks?"

"Yes, you are right," answered the jailer.

"What quarter is the wind in?"

"In the east, I think."

"That will do," said the brigand.

"What are you driving at, comrade?" asked the jailer.

"Nothing," answered the brigand.

"Farewell, comrade, till early to-morrow morning."

"Yes, till to-morrow," replied the brigand.

And the noise of the heavy closing door prevented the executioner and his companion from hearing the wild laughter which followed these mocking words.

## L.

Do you hope to end up with another sin?

ALEX. SOUMET.

Let us now take a glance at the other cell adjoining the musketeers' barracks, where our old acquaintance Turiaf Musdoemon was imprisoned.

It seems astonishing that Musdoemon, so replete with cunning and artifice, should readily confess his crime before the court in which he had been condemned, and should so generously withhold the part his ungrateful master, Chancellor d'Ahlefeld, had taken throughout. One thing was certain—Musdoemon was in no way changed. This seeming generosity was only a further proof of his wonderful ability. When he knew that his infernal machinations were discovered, he was completely dumfounded; but this feeling soon passed off. He plainly perceived that, as he had no chance of ruining his former victims, he must take the best means of saving himself. He saw but two ways of doing so—either to cast the whole blame on Count



d'Ahlefeld for his share in the crime, or to take all the consequences on his own shoulders. An ordinary person would have decided on the first course, but Musdœmon chose the second. The chancellor was a chancellor, and there was nothing really compromising in the documents. It was otherwise with the clerk. The proofs against him were overwhelming. The looks which the latter had exchanged with the president also helped to determine him, and he felt assured Count d'Ahlefeld would effect his escape; not from gratitude for past assistance, but in hopes of future services.

He paced his dimly lighted cell, fully convinced that he would be set free that night. He examined this old stone dungeon, which had been constructed in the days of some of the ancient monarchs, whose names were lost to history. The culprit was astonished to find himself on a wooden flooring, that echoed every step, as though it were placed over some cavity. He noticed a large iron ring in the arched roof, from which an old piece of rope was dangling. As time passed, he listened impatiently to the tower clock striking the different hours, which echoed dismally through the weary watches of the night.

At length he heard footsteps approaching, his heart beat with hope. The enormous lock

creaked, the bolts moved, and the chains fell ; then as the door opened, his face beamed with joy.

The same individual in scarlet we left with Han, now entered with a coil of rope in his hand. He was followed by four halberdiers, in black uniform, and fully armed with swords and pikes.

Musdœmon was still in his legal wig and gown, which evidently had an imposing effect on the man in red, who immediately bowed respectfully, according to custom.

"My lord," said he, hesitatingly to the prisoner, "is it with your worship that we have to do business?"

"Yes, yes," replied Musdœmon, hoping this polite address was the prelude to his release, for he had not perceived the style of his visitor's costume.

"You call yourself," said the man, fixing his eyes on the open parchment before him, "Turiaf Musdœmon?"

"Precisely ; you have been sent by the grand chancellor?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"Do not fail to express my gratitude to his grace, after you have carried out your orders."

The man in red looked astonished.

"Your—gratitude !"

"Yes, certainly, my friends; for I probably cannot do so myself for some time to come."

"'Probably!'" echoed the man, ironically.

"And you quite understand," pursued Musdœmon, "that I must not show myself ungrateful for so great a service."

"By the cross of the penitent thief," cried the other, with a hoarse laugh, "to hear your worship, any one would think that the chancellor was bestowing a real favor on you."

"No doubt about it. After all, he is only rendering me strict justice."

"Strict justice it may be. You do then allow that it is strict justice? This is the first time during the twenty years I have been in office that I have heard such an avowal. Come, my lord, all these words are but a waste of time. Are you ready?"

"I am," said Musdœmon joyfully, making for the door.

"Wait, wait a moment," said the man in red, dropping his coil of rope.

Musdœmon stopped.

"What is all that rope for?"

"Your worship has every reason to put that question. I have certainly too much rope by half. At the trial I thought I should have more criminals to pass through my hands."

Thus speaking the man uncoiled his rope.

"Now, let us hasten," said Musdœmon.

"Your worship is in a great hurry; would you not like to say a prayer or two?"

"No other than the one I have already said to you—tender my best thanks to his grace. For God's sake, do not linger here," added Musdœmon. "I am anxious to leave. Have we very far to go?"

"Far to go?" repeated the man in red, taking his measurement of the rope. "The length of the route cannot greatly fatigue your worship, as it ends here."

Musdœmon shuddered.

"What do you mean?"

"What do you mean yourself?" returned the other.

"Oh, God!" exclaimed the horror-stricken Musdœmon, now dimly aware of the truth.

"Who are you?"

"I am the hangman."

The poor wretch trembled like a parched leaf in the wind.

"Have you not come to aid my escape?" murmured he, almost inaudibly.

The hangman shouted with laughter.

"Yes, indeed, I have come to help you to the spirit land, whence no one, I vow, will ever call for you."

Musdœmon threw himself on the ground.

"Mercy! mercy! pray have pity on me!"

"By my faith," said the hangman coldly, "this is the first time such a request has been made on me. Do you take me for the king?"

The miserable man, who was lately so joyful, crawled in the dust, rolled his head from side to side, and amidst his tears and sobs he kissed the hangman's feet.

"Come, be still," said the man. "I never yet saw the black gown humble itself before my red blouse."

He gave the pleader a kick.

"Now, comrade, pray God and the saints for help; they will pay more heed to you than I shall."

Musdœmon remained kneeling, with his head buried in his hands, crying bitterly. By stretching himself, the hangman had succeeded in running the rope through the ring under the arch. He gave it a double twist, to make it firm, and prepared a slip-knot at the other end.

"I have finished." When these horrible preparations were complete, he said: "Have you also ended with life?"

"No," answered Musdœmon, rising; "this must be some terrible mistake, for Chancellor d'Ahlefeld cannot be so vile. Besides, I am essential to him. It is impossible you have been sent to execute me. Aid me to escape, or fear the chancellor's anger."

“Did you not say that you were Turiaf Musdoemon?” asked the hangman.

The prisoner hesitated in silence for a moment:

“No,” said he suddenly, “my name is not Musdoemon, but Turiaf Orugix.”

“Orugix!” exclaimed the hangman. “Orugix?”

He quickly pulled off the wig which hid the face of the condemned man, and gave a stupefied shout:

“My brother!”

“Your brother!” repeated the prisoner joyfully, though a little shame was apparent in the avowal; “are you . . .”

“Nychol Orugix, executioner of the Drontheimhus, at your service, brother Turiaf.”

The condemned man threw his arms round the executioner’s neck, calling him “his brother, his dear brother!” A witness would in no way have been affected by this show of brotherly affection, for Turiaf’s method of pleasing was evidently only for the occasion, and fear had much to do with the smiles he lavished on his brother. Nychol looked gloomy and embarrassed. The scene reminded one of a tiger fawning on an elephant, when the monster’s heavy foot weighs on its body and is about to crush him.

"This is fortunate, brother Nychol. I am delighted to see you again."

"And I am sorry for you, brother Turiaf."

The prisoner pretended not to hear, and continued, in a trembling voice:

"You have doubtless a wife and children. You must take me to see my charming sister, and let me embrace my dear nephews."

"By satan's cross!" muttered the hangman.

"I will be a second father to them. Brother, listen to me. I am powerful; I have influence . . ."

The brother answered in a sinister accent:

"I know you had. At present you need only think of the influence you have no doubt managed to secure for yourself with the saints."

The condemned man now gave up all hope.

"Oh, God! what can you mean, dear Nychol? Surely, now that I have found you, I am saved? You and I are sons of the same mother. We shared games in childhood; and remember, Nychol, you are my brother."

"You never remembered it until now," retorted the savage Nychol.

"No, but it is not possible that I should die by my brother's hand."

"Well, it's your own fault, Turiaf. You stopped my career, and prevented me from

being royal executioner at Copenhagen, so here I am nothing but a wretched headsman of a province. If you had not acted as a bad brother, you would not have had to complain of my conduct, which now so disgusts you. I should not have been in the Drontheimhus, and another would have done service for you. Brother, we have said quite enough about it, and you must die."

Death to the wicked is fearful to contemplate, while to the good it seems but rest. Both must leave this mortal coil. The just man views it as a release from his prison-house; while to the wicked it appears like being dragged from a fortress. Hell reveals itself to the perverted soul, which had thought to end in nothingness; and when the spirit stays for a moment at death's door, it finds that its hopes of a void have fled.

The prisoner writhed on the floor, tossed his arms wildly about, and gave the most heart-rending cries, more fearful to hear than the eternal lament of the condemned soul.

"Merciful God! saints of heaven! if you exist, have pity on me. Nychol, my Nychol, in the name of our mother, oh, pray, let me live."

The hangman showed his official mandate.

"I cannot; the order is precise."

"This document cannot concern me," stammered the despairing prisoner. "It relates



to a certain Musdœmon, and I am Turiaf Orugix."

"You are making game of me," said Nychol, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Why, I know it means you. Besides," he added, harshly, "yesterday you would not have owned to your brother that you were Turiaf Orugix, and to-day you were only Turiaf Musdœmon to him."

"Brother! my brother!" pursued the wretched man; "well, then, just wait till to-morrow. It is impossible the grand chancellor can have sent my death-warrant. It is some fearful mistake. Count d'Ahlefeld has real affection for me. Spare my life, I implore you, my dear Nychol. I shall soon regain my former influence, and I will amply requite you for this service."

"You can only render me one, Turiaf," interrupted the hangman. "I have already lost two executions, on which I firmly relied—that of ex-Chancellor Schumacker and the viceroy's son. I am so unfortunate. The only two now remaining are those of the demon and yourself. As your execution is to be conducted in secret at night, it will bring me in twelve golden ducats. The only favor I expect from you is to let me finish all quietly."

"Oh, God!" cried the condemned man, in his agony.

"This is really the first concession, and it shall be the last I shall ever require from you. In return, I promise that you shall not suffer much. I will hang you in all brotherly feeling; so resign yourself."

Musdæmon rose. His lips were blue, and trembling with anger, his teeth chattered, and he foamed at the mouth.

"By satan! to think I should have saved this d'Ahlefeld, and embraced my brother, and in return they would kill me. I am then to die at night in this dark, lonesome cell, without making my curses resound from one end of the kingdom to the other. And must I leave all their crimes unmasked? Was it for such a death as this that I sullied the whole of my life? Wretch," said he, turning to his brother, "would you be a fratricide?"

"I am executioner," replied the phlegmatic Nychol.

"No, I will not die such a death as this," continued he, with flaming eyes, throwing himself with fury on the hangman, like an enraged bull at bay. "I have not lived like the dreaded serpent that I should now be crushed like a worm. I die, but the last sting shall be deadly."

Thus speaking, he grasped in enmity the one he had so lately embraced as a brother.

The fawning and affectionate Musdœmon showed himself in his true colors. He felt the very depths of despair, and after crawling along as a tiger, he rose with all the fury of that wild beast. While the brothers were thus struggling, it would have been difficult to determine which was the most frightful to witness—he who fought with all the blind ferocity of a savage animal, or the other, who battled with all the cunning fury of a devil.

But the four halberdiers, hitherto impassible, soon interfered, and Musdœmon was compelled to give way. He threw himself against the stones with smothered cries, and tore his nails on the stones.

“Am I to die, you devils of perdition? Die! without my cries resounding through these vaults, and all my efforts to be released from these walls prove in vain?”

He was seized, and offered no resistance; he was utterly exhausted by his useless struggle. In order to pinion him, his gown had to be taken off, and a sealed packet fell to the ground.

“What is that?” said the hangman.

An expression of infernal hope came into the prisoner’s eyes.

“How could I have forgotten that?” muttered he. “Listen to me, brother Nychol,” said he, in a friendly tone, “those papers

belong to the grand chancellor. Promise to deliver them to him, and then do what you like with me."

"Now that you are quiet again, I promise to carry out your last wishes, although you have certainly acted in a most unbrotherly way toward me. On Orugix's honor, those papers shall be delivered to the chancellor."

"Hand them to him yourself," said the condemned man, with a strange smile, which the hangman did not understand, as smiles were not much in his way. "The pleasure they will cause his grace may lead to your future advancement."

"Indeed, brother!" said Orugix. "Thank you. Perhaps I may be named royal executioner. What say you? Well, let us part friends. I forgive you the wounds you inflicted on me with your nails, and you forgive me the rope collar I am about to place on you."

"The chancellor promised me another kind of collar," replied Musdœmon.

Then the halberdiers led him, completely pinioned, to the centre of the cell; the hangman passed the fatal noose round his neck.

"Turiaf, are you ready?"

"One minute, just a minute more," implored the condemned man, whose fears had returned with double force. "Have mercy,

brother, pray ; do not pull the rope until I tell you."

"I have no need to pull the rope," replied Orugix.

After a minute's silence, he repeated the question :

"Are you ready?"

"Only another minute. Alas ! must I then die?"

"Turiaf, I have no time for waiting."

While thus speaking he motioned to the halberdiers to draw back.

"Just a word more, brother. Do not fail to deliver that packet to Count d'Ahlefeldt."

"Be quite easy on that score," replied his brother ; and then for the third time he repeated the question : "Come, are you ready?"

The miserable wretch was again about to speak, doubtless to implore a moment's reprieve, when the impatient hangman stooped and pressed a brass button which was fixed in the floor.

The planks fell asunder, and the unfortunate man fell into a square trap beneath, amid the vibrations of the rope so suddenly weighed down, which swayed with the convulsions of the dying man. Nothing but the rope was visible without the gloomy pit, from which the sound of a fresh breeze and running water could be distinctly heard.

The halberdiers even drew back in horror. The hangman neared the pit, and seizing the cord which still vibrated, lowered himself until he stood on the shoulders of the victim. The fatal cord stretched and became steady. A smothered sigh came from the trap.

“Good,” said the hangman, climbing back into the cell. “Farewell, brother.”

He drew a cutlass from his belt.

“Go feed the fishes in the gulf. May your body be the prey of the waters whilst your soul be that of fire.”

At these words he cut the stretched cord. The part fastened to the ring flew up to the roof, whilst the body fell into the well and continued underground to the gulf.

The hangman closed the trap as he had opened it. When he stood up, he saw that the cell was full of smoke.

“What is this?” he asked the halberdiers; “whence comes this smoke?”

They were as ignorant as he. Surprised, they opened the door of the cell; the corridors were likewise full of heavy sickening smoke. A secret door passage led them, thoroughly alarmed, to the square court, where a frightful spectacle awaited them.

An immense sheet of flame, fanned by the violence of the east wind, was devouring the military prison and the barracks of the

musketeers. It burst through the roof and windows and around the walls. The black towers of Munckholm were sometimes reddened by the glare and sometimes hidden in the smoke.

A jailer who came running into the court told them in a few words that the fire had started, during the sleep of Han of Iceland's guards, in the monster's cell, to whom some one had been so imprudent as to give straw and fire.

"How unlucky I am!" cried Orugix when he heard this; "see, even Han of Iceland will escape me! The wretch will be burned, and I will not even have his body, although I paid two ducats for it."

Meanwhile the unfortunate Munckholm musketeers, suddenly awakened to their deadly peril, rushed to the heavy door so firmly barricaded. Their cries of anguish and distress could be heard from within. Some were at the fiery windows wringing their hands, others threw themselves into the yard, resolved to meet one death rather than face the other. The whole edifice was in flames before the rest of the garrison could arouse. All help was vain. Fortunately the building was isolated. When they at length succeeded in bursting open the massive door, all was over. At that very moment the roof came down with a crash on

the unfortunate soldiers, bringing down in its fall the whole of the burning building. Nothing could be seen, but from the midst of the fierce flames some feeble shouts could be heard.

The next morning, the blackened fragments of the walls alone were left among the smouldering ashes. When search was made, calcined bones and disfigured lifeless bodies were found among the ruins. Only thirty soldiers remained alive of the fine Munckholm regiment, and most of these were wounded.

When, in clearing away the débris of the prison, they came to the fatal cell where the fire started and which had contained Han of Iceland, they found the remains of a human body, lying near an iron brazier, upon broken chains. It was only observed that among these cinders there were two skulls, although there had been only one body.



LI.

SALADIN.—Bravo, Ibrahim! You are truly a bearer of good tidings; I thank you for your good news.

THE MAMELUKE.—Good! But is that all?

SALADIN.—For what do you wait?

THE MAMELUKE.—So there is nothing more for the bearer of good tidings.

LESSING—*Nathan the Good.*

Pale and haggard, Count d'Ahlefeld paced his apartment; he crushed in his clenched hands a packet of letters which he had just read, and stamped his foot on the polished marble floor and the golden fringed carpets.

At the other end of the apartment was standing albeit in an attitude of deep respect, Nychol Orugix, dressed in his infamous purple, and hat in hand.

"You have rendered me a service, Musdœmon," the chancellor muttered behind his breath with suppressed rage.

The hangman timidly raised his stupid face.

"Your grace is satisfied?"

"What do you want, you?" said the chancellor, turning roughly.

The hangman, proud to have attracted the chancellor's notice, beamed with hope.

"What do I wish, your grace? The place of executioner at Copenhagen, if your grace deigns to reward with that high favor the good news which I have brought."

The chancellor called two halberdiers of the guard to the door of his apartment.

"Seize that scoundrel! He has had the insolence to set me at defiance."

The two guards dragged the dismayed Nychol off, he tried to say a few more words.

"My lord . . ."

"From this moment you cease to be executioner of the Drontheimhus; I cancel your appointment," exclaimed the chancellor, slamming the door.

The chancellor read and re-read these letters from the Countess to Musdœmon, sure proofs of Elphège's dishonor, as they were in her own handwriting. He is now fully aware that Ulrica is not his daughter, and the still lamented Frederick was perhaps likewise not his son. With the unhappy count pride had brought its own punishment—this failing had been the mainspring of all his crimes. It was no small matter to see his plans of vengeance entirely frustrated; but nothing compared to the knowledge that his dreams of ambition could never be realized—his past dishonored,

his future a total blank. In vainly trying to ruin his enemies he has only succeeded in losing his own reputation, his chief adviser, and even his rights as husband and father.

Hé resolves to see once more the wretched creature who had deceived him. He passed through the spacious rooms with rapid steps, shaking the letters with fury, until he arrived at Elphège's door. In his rage he threw it violently open.

His guilty wife had suddenly heard the news of her son Frederick's horrible death from Colonel Vœthaïn. The unfortunate mother was mad.

## CONCLUSION

What I said in a joke, you have taken seriously.

SPANISH ROMANCE—*King Alphonse to Bernard.*

During the next fortnight the late events formed the sole topic of conversation throughout the Drontheimhus. The crowd collected in town, who had vainly waited in hopes of witnessing seven executions, now began to despair of having the pleasure.

Old women, half blind, averred that on the night of the incendiarism they had seen Han of Iceland fly away in the flame, laughing in the midst of the fire, as he hurled the burning roof on the Munckholm musketeers.

After a short absence, which to Ethel seemed ages, Ordener returned to the Lion of Sleswig Tower, accompanied by General Levin de Knud and the chaplain, Athanasius Munder.

Schumacker was in the garden, leaning on his daughter's arm. The newly-married couple had to content themselves with exchanging a loving look. Schumacker pressed the young

man's hand affectionately, and bowed cordially to the two strangers.

"Young friend," said the old captive, "may Heaven bless your return."

"My lord," replied Ordener, "I have just left my father at Berghen, and I have come to embrace my father at Drontheim."

"What can you mean?" inquired the old man, astonished.

"Will you give me your daughter, my noble lord?"

"My daughter!" exclaimed the prisoner, turning toward the flushed and trembling Ethel.

"Yes, my lord. I love your Ethel; I have devoted my whole life to her; she is truly mine."

Schumacker's brow darkened.

"My son, you are most noble and worthy; and though your father injured me, I freely forgive him for your sake. I would gladly sanction this union, if it were not for one great obstacle."

"What is that?" said Ordener, anxiously.

"You love my daughter; but are you really sure she loves you?"

The lovers gave each other a surprised glance.

"Yes," continued Schumacker, "I regret that it should be so, as I am attached to you,

and nothing would please me more than to know you were my son. But my daughter will not consent. Since your departure she recently expressed her aversion to you, and whenever I mentioned your name she tried in every way to turn the conversation, as though the subject were distasteful to her. Ordener, give up this idea. Believe me, love has its curse as well as hatred."

"My lord!" exclaimed Ordener, stupefied.

"Father," said Ethel, imploringly, with clasped hands.

"My child, do not distress yourself," interposed the old man. "I approve of this marriage, but the idea seems displeasing to you. I will not wound your feelings, Ethel; a great change has come over me during the last fortnight. I will not attempt to overcome your repugnance for Ordener. You are free."

Athanasius Munder smiled.

"She is not," said he.

"You are mistaken, noble father," added Ethel boldly. "I do not hate Ordener."

"What!" cried the father.

"I am . . ." replied Ethel. She stopped. Ordener knelt before the old man.

"She is my wife, father! Pardon me as my other father has already pardoned me, and bless your children."

Schumacker, astonished in turn, blessed the young couple kneeling before him.

"I have had so much cursing in my life," said he, "that I now seize, without any questioning, all occasions for blessing. But now explain to me . . ."

They explained all to him. He wept tenderly from gratitude and love.

"I thought myself clear-sighted, I am old, and I have not understood a young girl's heart."

"I am to call myself Ordener Guldenlew's!" said Ethel with childish joy.

"Ordener Guldenlew," continued old Schumacker, "you are a far better man than I ever was, for, in my prosperity, I would certainly never have degraded myself by uniting with me the poor and degraded daughter of an unfortunate outlaw."

The general took the prisoner's hand and gave him a roll of parchment:

"My lord count, do not speak thus. Here are your titles which the king had already sent to you by Dispolsen. His majesty has given you pardon and liberty as a dowry for the Countess of Danneskiold, your daughter."

"Pardon! Liberty!" repeated Ethel, overjoyed.

"Countess of Danneskiold!" added the father.

"Yes, count," continued the general, "you recover all your honors, all your property is restored."

"To whom do I owe all that?" asked the happy Schumacker.

"To General Levin de Knud," answered Ordener.

"Levin de Knud! Then I was right, Governor General, Levin de Knud, is the best of men. But why has he not himself come to bring me this happiness? Where is he?"

Ordener pointed with astonishment to the general who was smiling and weeping at the same time:

"There he is!"

The meeting of those two old companions of youth and greatness was a touching scene. Schumacker's heart at last gave vent to his feelings. In meeting Han of Iceland he had ceased to hate men; in meeting Ordener and Levin he learned to love them.

Soon fine feasts solemnized the marriage in the cell. Life began to smile on the young couple who had smiled on death. Count d'Ahlefeld saw them happy: it was his cruelest punishment.

Athanasius Munder also had his joy. He obtained the pardon of his twelve criminals, and Ordener added that of his old companions in misfortune, Kennybol, Jonas and Norbith,



who returned free and joyful to the peaceful miners to announce that the king had remitted the tax.

Schumacker did not long enjoy the union of Ethel and Ordener; liberty and happiness had upset his mind: he went to enjoy other happiness and other liberty. He died in the same year, 1699, and this sorrow taught the young people that there is no perfect happiness on earth. He was buried in the church at Veer, in ground in Jutland, owned by his son-in-law, and the tomb bore all his titles which captivity had taken away from him. The alliance of Ordener and Ethel founded the future family of the Counts of Danne-skiold.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Name of the morgue at Drontheim.

<sup>2</sup> Bird which gives eiderdown. The Norwegian peasants make nests for them in order that they may surprise, and pluck them.

<sup>3</sup> Odelsrecht, a singular law by which Norwegian peasants had a right to repurchase their holdings, by giving notice to that effect every ten years, thus preventing the present tenant from disposing of the same.

<sup>4</sup> Bran bread eaten by the poorer class in Norway.

<sup>5</sup> Bloodright, perquisite of the headsman.

<sup>6</sup> The waters of Lake Sparbo are renowned for tempering steel.

<sup>7</sup> Frederick III. was the dupe of Borch or Borrichius, a Danish chemist, and, above all, of Borri, a Milanese charlatan, who called himself the favorite of the archangel Michael. This impostor, after having astonished Strasbourg and Amsterdam with his pretended prodigies, enlarged the sphere of his ambition and the audacity of his deceits; after having cheated the people, he dared to cheat kings. He commenced with Queen Christine at Hamburg and ended with Frederick at Copenhagen.

<sup>8</sup> The sea dogs are dreaded by fishermen, because they frighten the fish.

<sup>9</sup> The ancient lords of Norway, before Griffenfeld founded a regular nobility, bore the titles of *hersa*, baron, or *jarl*, count. The English word earl is derived from the latter.

<sup>10</sup> The fisherman's patron.

<sup>11</sup> Grave differences indeed took place between Denmark and Sweden because Count d'Ahlefeld had asked a treaty giving to the king of Denmark the title *rex Gothorum*, which seemed to attribute to the Danish monarch the sovereignty of Gothland, a Swedish province; whilst the Swedes only wished to grant him the title of *rex Gotorum*, a vague denomination equivalent to the ancient title of the Danish sovereigns, *king of the Goths*. It was this *h*, the cause, not of a war, but of long and menacing negotiations, to which Schumacker no doubt alluded.

<sup>12</sup> Some chroniclers assert that in 1525 a Bishop of Borglum rendered himself famous by various brigandages. He was in league, it was said, with the pirates who infested the coast of Norway.

<sup>13</sup> According to popular belief *Nysthiem* was the hell to which all went who died of sickness or old age.









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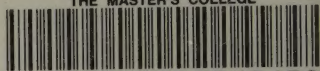
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The novels of Victor Hugo

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